

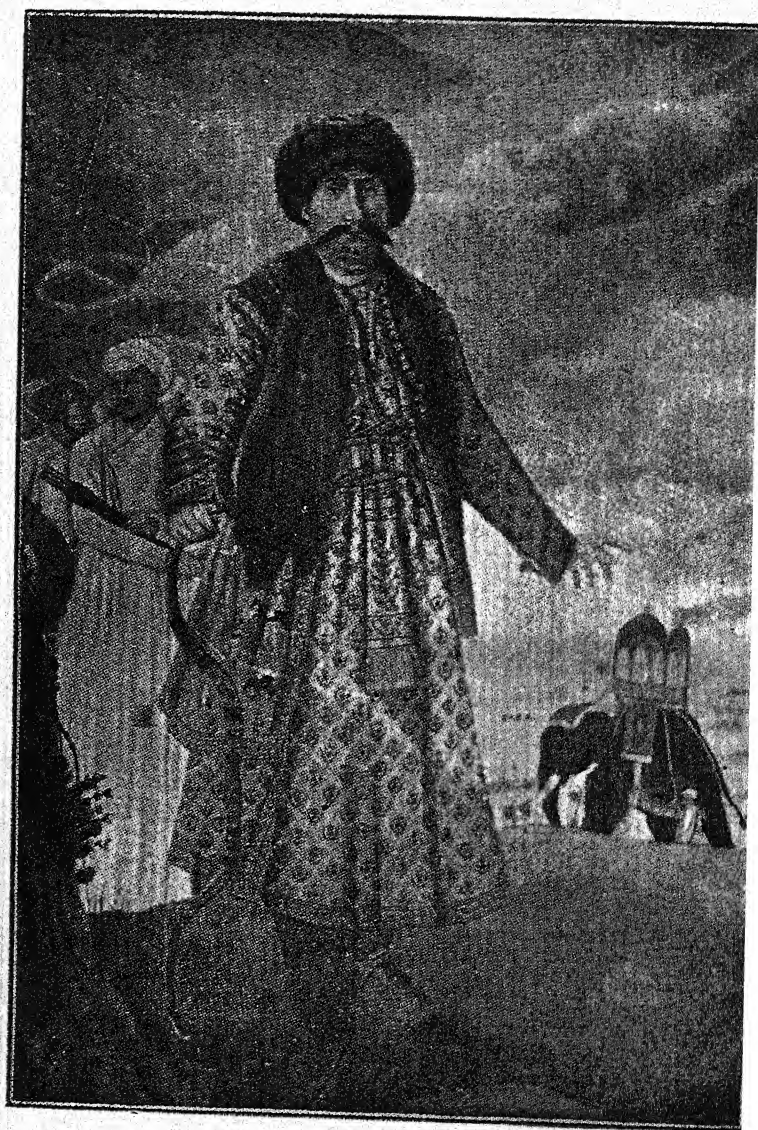
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Shuja-ud-Daulah

# SHUJA-UD-DAULAH

by

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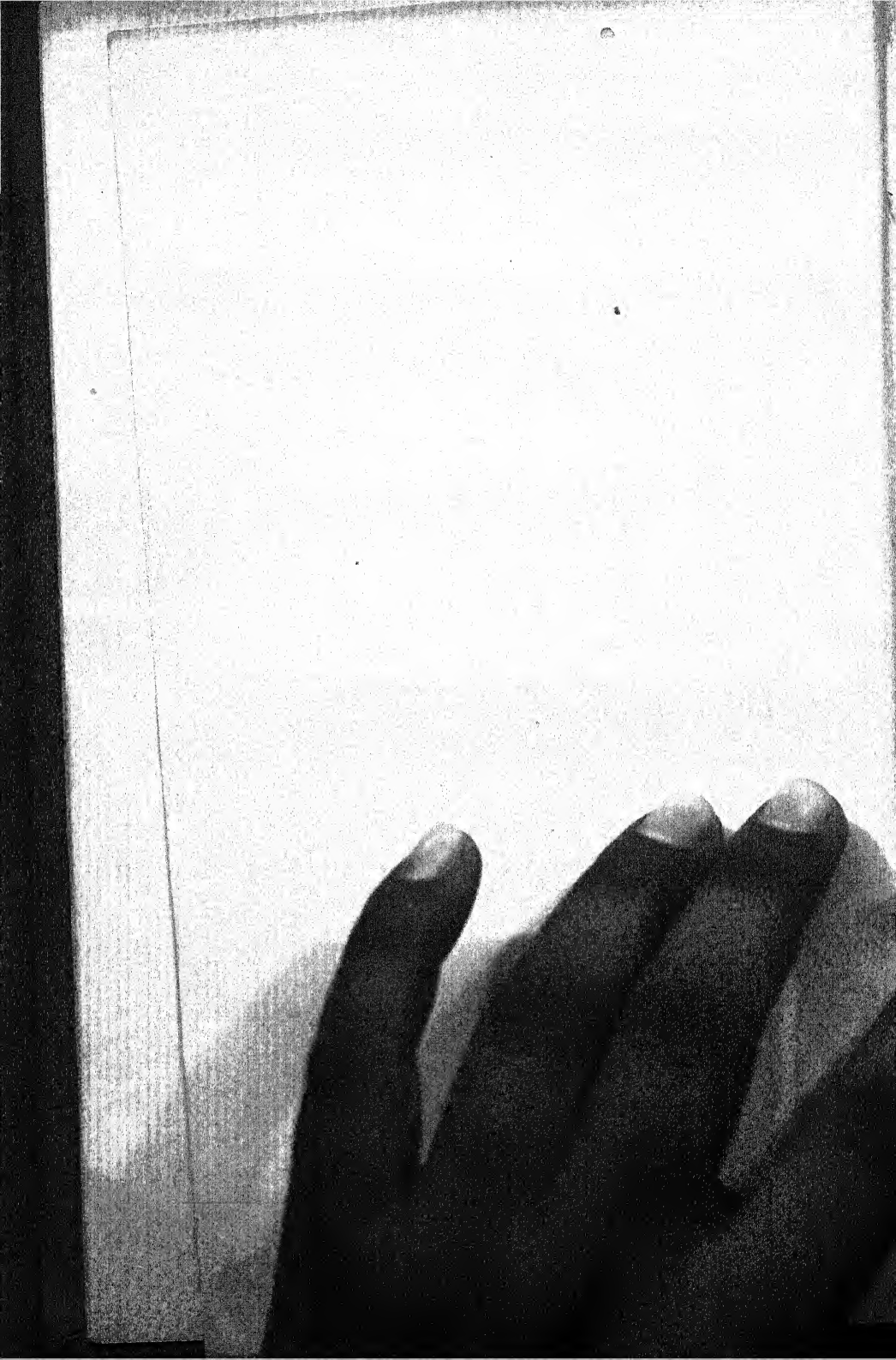
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*Dedicated*  
*to*  
*My revered guru*  
*Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Kt., C.I.E., D.Litt.*  
*with*  
*Affection and Gratitude*





## PREFACE

The second volume of *Shuja-ud-Daulah*,—the third of the series that I planned to write nearly eighteen years ago—is now presented before the public. The first two volumes were concerned with medieval period, but the present one deals with what is usually designated as the British or, more correctly, modern period of our history. It embraces the history of Northern India for full ten years—from 1765 to 1775—, a highly significant epoch, and carries the story of Shuja-ud-Daulah's activity to his tragic and premature death in 1775. It opens with a discussion and interpretation of the momentous treaty of Allahabad which witnessed the constitutional entrance of the English East India Company into the body politic of India, and shows clearly how Shuja who was at least theoretically the Company's equal in status in 1765 gradually sank into a secondary position owing to the English interpretation and enforcement of the treaty in their favour from time to time, and also because of the Wazir's personal ambition which drove him to seek English armed assistance against his neighbours and countrymen. Oudh was destined to be a main training ground of the Company's agents in India, who gradually evolved more or less a permanent policy towards Indian Powers after coming into contact with Shuja-ud-Daulah. An attempt is made in this work to present a dispassionate analysis of the early British policy towards Indian States and of the foreign relations of the successive governors from Clive to W. Hastings.

Among many other political problems that faced Indian rulers and statesmen during that epoch mention may be made particularly of those connected with Shah Alam's relations with the English and the reaction in various quarters of his scheme of seating himself on his ancestral throne at Delhi. The Maratha invasion of Northern India in 1770, their

ambition and policy in Hindustan and the attitude of the English towards them, have been for the first time given here on the basis of their own unpublished records. Three chapters have been devoted to the causes and results of the fatal Ruhela War (1774), which became one of the counts at the impeachment of Warren Hastings by the British Parliament.

The work concludes with an elaborate account of the social, economic and cultural condition of the country during the period on the basis of absolutely contemporary records in various languages, showing how our political degradation, more than anything else, became responsible for the country passing into the hands of a handful of foreign merchant adventurers from beyond the seas.

The volume was ready faired out for the press before the end of 1942. But owing to abnormal conditions created by the War, it had to be withheld from publication for three long years during the second half of which it remained in the press.

I would repeat my thanks to the authorities of various MS libraries in Northern India and to the Government of India for their kind permission to inspect and make use of their records. The burden of reading the proofs has fallen on my eldest son, Dharma Bhanu, B.A. (Honours), who has also taken the trouble of preparing a descriptive index.

D.A.-V. College Hostel,  
Lahore  
June, 1945.

A. L. SRIVASTAVA

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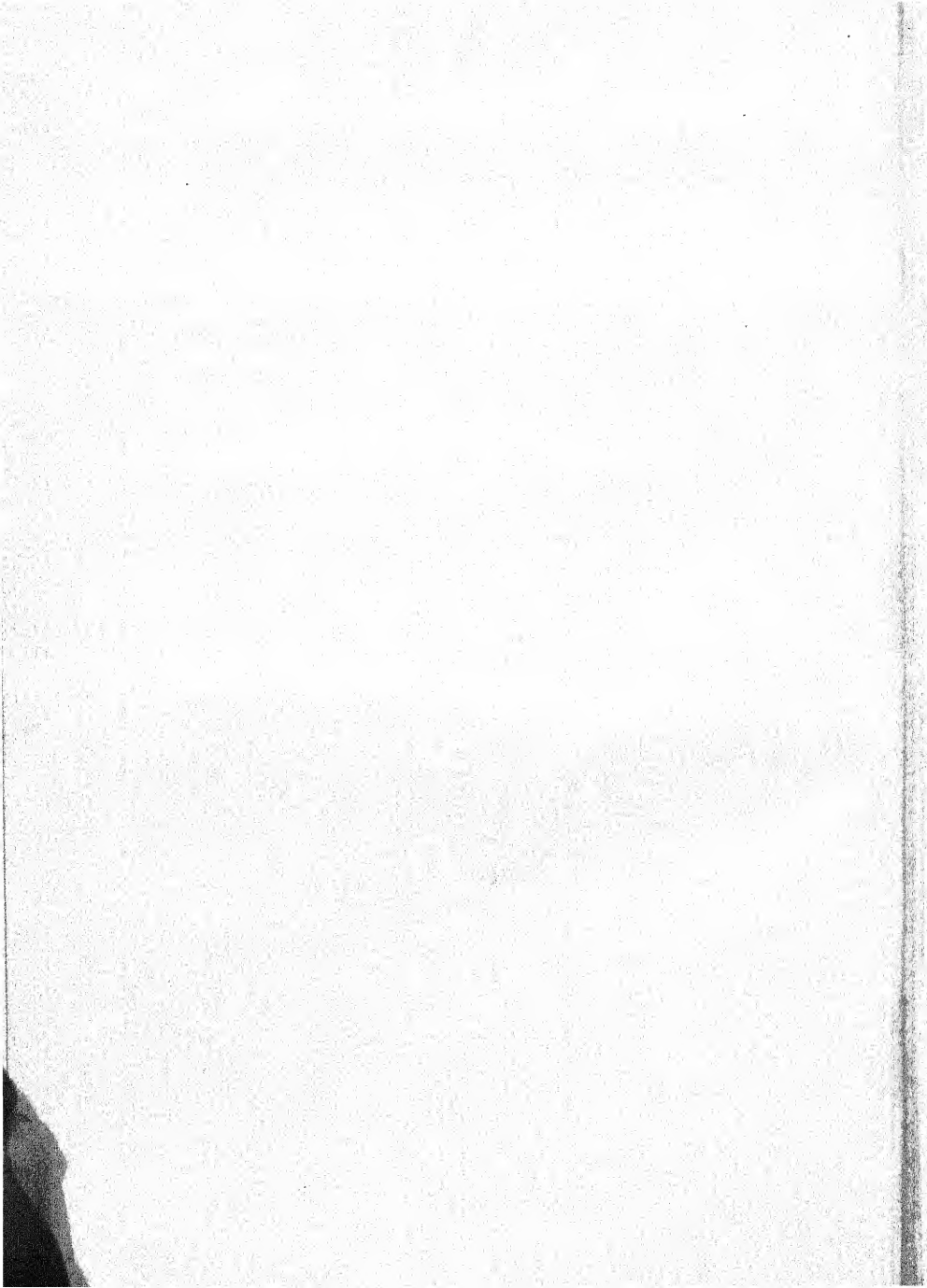
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## CHAPTER X

### THE PEACE WITH THE ENGLISH : TREATIES OF ALLAHABAD, 1765

#### 1. Why Shuja-ud-daulah surrendered himself to Carnac.

It has been related in the previous volume that after his final appeal to arms, which culminated in his overthrow on the battle-field of Kora, Shuja-ud-daulah, having been abandoned by his allies and troops, including the notorious Samru (who marched off to take service under Jawahar Singh Jat of Bharatpur) and reduced to the extremity, resolved to throw himself on the generosity of the English and personally wait upon general Carnac without any condition or agreement.<sup>1</sup> The details of the circumstances leading to this resolution and the results therefrom make an interesting study and show how the spirits of an uncommonly proud and sensitive man born in the purple are tamed and even humbled by an adverse turn in the Fortune's Wheel. Even before the rout of his hastily raised levies, the fallen wazir had realised the hopelessness of his position and despatched Gentil to the British camp to make peace overtures and to beg for terms. After all was over with his mercenaries, Shuja retreated to Farrukhabad with precipitation to join his family and dependants there. In the agony of his heart he complained bitterly of the Ruhela and Bangash indifference and of the Maratha defection, and realising that in view of the smallness of his army and resources and faithlessness of those from whom he had expected sympathy and active aid it was futile to renew the struggle, he sought the advice of his friends and well-wishers as to the best means of recovering his do-

<sup>1</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to President and Council, Fort St. George, 6th July, 1765.



minions. No other proposal except the one made by Ahmad Khan Bangash met with acceptance. In spite of his life-long rivalry with the wazir, the Bangash gave him a piece of sound advice in these words: "Not a single Afgnan nor any one of other tribes with whose assistance you expect victory will stand by you. In thus waiting [for them to join you] you will only consume the little amount (literally a few handfuls) of money that still remains with you in raising and maintaining an army and thereby helping your enemies, and you will eventually find yourself where you are (to-day). These very so-called allies and helpers shall behave like mere spectators (on the battle-field) and cause ridicule for all time. As for my part, I have nothing but advice to offer and it is this that either fall on the enemy with the few troops you can trust and if you are lucky enough to survive such an action, you may come out victorious, if not you will have staked your life and honour. If, however, such a course seems hazardous, you should get up and all alone and without anybody's mediation go to the English camp. From what has been heard of them it appears that they act with good sense and generosity, and it is therefore likely that they shall not use treachery and shall not continue to throw you into the abyss of destruction. It is highly probable that out of regard for the importance and reputation of your house, they will open the door of friendship and shall leave nothing undone to satisfy you with their attention and friendliness."<sup>2</sup> As this advice had the ring of candour and sincerity about it, it appealed to Shuja-ud-daulah and as he had no alternative, he decided to follow it without loss of time.

Shuja-ud-daulah's decision coincided with the success of the mission of peace undertaken by Gentil. The clever French privateer, anxious to save the friendly wazir from utter ruin in order to make use of him in a future struggle between his nation and the English for recovering the French political fortune in India, successfully endeavoured to

<sup>2</sup> *Siyar*, II. 769. *T.M.*, 250b; *Kalyan*, 150b; *Khair-ud-din*, 159, support the *Siyar*.

inspire Carnac with pacific sentiments.<sup>3</sup> Shitab Rai also played an important part in bringing about friendly relations between the antagonists.<sup>4</sup> The Fort William authorities had all along been undoubtedly anxious for the termination of the war but not unless Shuja had complied with their original demands *in toto*. But now the far-sighted statesmanship of Clive, who had landed at Calcutta as governor of Bengal on 3rd May 1765 and who clearly saw that none but Shuja could convert Oudh into an effective buffer state against the Marathas<sup>5</sup> and the new commander-in-chief's pacific intentions, produced a change in their angle of vision and the wazir's decision of an unconditional surrender led to a complete cessation of hostilities and readiness of the parties to come to a willing and friendly settlement. It is obvious that the English policy at the time did not aim at the permanent occupation of Oudh and Allahabad and the assumption of responsibility of direct administration of the wazir's country, an experiment which had not yet been tried even in Bengal and was beyond their capacity. Their main objects were two, namely, the punishment of their enemies (Mir Qasim etc.) and the protection of their western frontier, and Carnac was firmly of opinion that if Shuja ud-daulah were restored to his dominion, he "will prove a much better security to our frontier than any one we can put in these dominions in his room." Accordingly the commander welcomed Shuja's offer and Gentil promised to bring him thither.<sup>6</sup> A quick correspondence between Gentil and the wazir strengthened the latter's resolution of interviewing the English commander personally and he set out from Farrukhabad for this purpose without even demanding from

<sup>3</sup> *Gentil*, 248 ; *Khair-ud-din*, 160.

<sup>4</sup> *Siyar*, II. 769 ; *T.M.*, 250b. *Gentil*, however, says that Shitab Rai was hostile to peace.

<sup>5</sup> The Company's letter to Madras, dated May 13th, 1768, *vide Ben. Sel. Com. Progs.* of December 13, 1768.

<sup>6</sup> Carnac to *Sel. Com.*, 26th May, 1765, *vide Ben. Sel. Com. Progs.* of 11th June, 1765, Vol. 1765, pp. 53-54. *Gentil*, p. 245, says that Carnac promised to him the restoration to Shuja of his *subahs*.

Carnac a pledge for the security of his person. It is worthy of note that all this was promptly done within a fortnight of the battle of Kora. On 17th May, 1765, (26th Zi-Qada, 1178 A.H.) he arrived at Bilgram, 16 miles south-west of Hardoi, and the same day he wrote the following letter to Carnac, expressing regret for his past conduct, and informing him that he was already on his way to the English camp and would meet him in a short time :—

“ It is known all over the world that the illustrious Chiefs of the English Nation are constant and unchangeable in their friendship which my heart is fully persuaded of. The late disturbances were contrary to my inclination, but it was so ordered by Providence : I now see things in their proper light, and have a strong desire to come to you alone, and I am persuaded you will treat me in a manner befitting your own honour. You have shown great favour to others. When you become acquainted with me you will see with your own eyes, and be thoroughly convinced of my attachment from which I never will depart while I have life. I am this day, 26th of moon arrived at Bilgram. Please God in a very short time I shall have the happiness of a meeting with you. As for other particulars, I refer you to Mouyun-o-Dowlah and Raja Shitab Roy my friend. *With his own hand* :— I regard not wealth nor the Government of Countries. Your favour and friendship is all I desire. Please God I will be with you very soon when you will do for me what you think best.”

Carnac, happy at the turn of events, assured Shuja “ the best reception ” in his power and the friendship of the English in the following reply that he despatched on the 25th :—

“ I have been favoured with your letter in which were some lines wrote with your own hand.....

“ The receipt of this letter gave me great pleasure. You was before unacquainted with our customs and disposition. Thanks to God that you are now become sensible of the justice and upright intentions of the English. Now

that you are pleased to come to me in a friendly manner, you may depend on the best reception in my power suitable to our customs : and I will not be deficient in forwarding whatever is reasonable for your interest. And when Your Excellency will shew a real attachment to the English, their friendship towards you in return will be made manifest to the whole world. You may with perfect confidence come here as to your own house and to those who wish your welfare. Further particulars you will hear from Mouyun-o-Dowlah and Shitab-Roy."

## 2. Shuja-ud-daulah in the English Camp.

With three to four hundred men Shuja-ud-daulah marched slowly on towards Jajmau where Carnac had hastily arrived on 25th May for according an honourable reception to the wazir. Leaving his troops on the other side of the Ganges he advanced towards the English camp with his brother-in-law Salar Jang and a few other attendants, 10 to 12 souls all told, and was respectfully received first by Swinton and Shitab Rai some distance in advance (26th) and then by Carnac himself who with his chief officers had proceeded towards the Ganges for this purpose. On approaching the river bank, they all got down from their horses, and Shuja seeing this, dismounted from his palanquin and embraced the general in Indian style. The commander, with all his officers and Shitab Rai presented him *nazar* (offering), each according to his rank, and followed his *palki* on foot to the tent which had been set up for his reception. All possible arrangements were made for his comfort and entertainment and no pains were spared to make him forget that he was an humble suppliant before the English company. Having spent two to three hours there, Shuja returned greatly satisfied to his camp on the other side of the Ganges. Carnac reported to the select committee on the 27th May that he had received the wazir "with all possible marks of distinction,

<sup>1</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 11th June, 1765, Vol. of 1765, pp. 54 and 55.

at which he expressed much satisfaction. He appears, however, a good deal dejected at his present condition, which must bear very hard upon him and he must find himself without resources or being as he undoubtedly is the most considerable man in the Empire and of an uncommon high spirit, he would not have submitted to such a condescension." "It will," added the commander-in-chief, "in my opinion greatly add to the credit of the English name throughout the country our behaving with generosity towards a person who has all along bore so high a reputation in Hyndostan."<sup>8</sup>

Shuja-ud-daulah's unconditional surrender caused great satisfaction and joy at Fort William and the Bengal select committee wrote to the Government of Bombay: "We have now the pleasure to acquaint you that Shuja Dowlah has surrendered himself to General Carnac without even demanding a pledge for the security of his person, and that he waits for Lord Clive's taking the command to receive such conditions of peace as we think proper to grant."<sup>9</sup>

### 3. The preliminary negotiations with Shuja-ud-daulah.

Shuja-ud-daulah stayed on near the English camp, anxiously awaiting the decision of the Calcutta council, and there was an exchange of visits, formal courtesies and entertainments between him and the English commander. Behind the cover of these social formalities diplomatic business was transacted for settling the preliminaries of a peace. The select committee, while approving of Carnac's suggestion that "every appearance of insult and violence to a person of Shujah Dowlah's character ought to be carefully avoided" instructed him not to enter into any definite agreement till the arrival there of Lord Clive who was shortly to proceed to the camp

<sup>8</sup> Carnac to Ben. Sel. Com., 26th and 27th May, 1765, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1765, pp. 53-56; *Siyar*, III. 769; *Kalyan*, 151; *T.M.*, 251a; *Khair-ud-din*, 160; *Broome*, I. 522.

<sup>9</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Fort St. George, 6th July 1765, *vide* letters issued by Sel. Com., 1765, p. 18.



with the object of immediately "establishing peace on a lasting and solid foundation." Meanwhile the general was asked to negotiate and settle the preliminaries, and the points which were sought to be secured for the company were recommended as follows :—firstly Balwant Singh should be pardoned and reinstated in the State of Benares ; secondly Najaf Khan should be favoured and encouraged ; thirdly Shah Alam's honour, safety and means of subsistence should be guaranteed and finally Mir Qasim and Samru should be surrendered or put to death by Shuja-ud-daulah. But this last condition was not recommended as essential, as the wazir was to be bound by ties of gratitude and not by compulsion. Carnac was further instructed to stipulate with Shuja for the establishment of English factories and complete liberty of trade for them in his *subahs*, but the committee made it clear that they "mean not to support this privilege by any military force, nor to introduce troops or garrison into his (Shuja's) country." <sup>10</sup>

As the rainy season was near at hand, Carnac and Shuja set out, after a few days' stay near Jajmau, towards Allahabad in order to get into touch with the emperor and discuss preliminaries with him, and all this while negotiations were proceeding slowly through the medium of Shitab Rai. Although the commander, in pursuance of the committee's instructions, deferred coming to a definite settlement with the wazir, he gave him hopes of the return of Oudh to him and informed him that he would be required to pay a war indemnity. Shuja-ud-daulah, drawing the general's attention to his circumstances, replied that he was not in a position to afford a sum of two lakhs of rupees even and it was only after long negotiations and much difficulty that he promised a sum of fifty lakhs of rupees. The next important problem was the fate of Najaf Khan. This "gallant young man," writes Carnac, "has lately been very active in our service,"

<sup>10</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Carnac, 10th June, 1765, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1765, pp. 51a and 51b ; also letter No. 13 from Sel. Com., 1765, pp. 8-9.

and he was disliked both by Shuja and the emperor. It was not without great diplomatic exertion that the general eventually succeeded in persuading Shah Alam (who met the party at Manikpur on 20th June) to agree to allow Najaf to hold the districts of Kora and Allahabad under him. Thus were the important preliminaries settled by the tact, and diplomacy of Carnac, and Clive had merely to put the seal of his approval upon them. Shuja-ud-daulah's anxiety was now over and he called from the Ruhela country his mother and family to Allahabad. A few days after he and Carnac proceeded to Benares to receive Clive who was coming to conclude a treaty with him and the emperor.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. Clive starts for Allahabad.

On 21st June, 1765 the Bengal select committee approved of Lord Clive's resolution of establishing cordial friendship with "country powers" by a personal interview with Shuja-ud-daulah and other chiefs. Echoing his sentiments and policy it authorised his Lordship in conjunction with Carnac "to stipulate such conditions with Shuja Dowlah, to form such connections with the country powers and to pursue such means as you (Clive) shall judge necessary to the Company's interest, the public welfare and obtaining a safe, honourable, advantageous and lasting peace." His attention was invited to the instructions about the preliminaries communicated to Carnac on 10th June, recommending that the wazir should be reinstated in *all his dominions* with a view to convert it into a strong and safe barrier against the Marathas, that an agreement should be made with Shuja-ud-daulah for carrying on trade and establishing factories in his country and that a grant of *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa should be obtained from the emperor. Clive was further authorised to include in the treaty any other conditions, if he thought them desirable.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Carnac to Sel. Com., 7th and 19th June, 3rd and 8th July, 1765, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. 1765, pp. 69, 96, 128-29; *Khair-ud-din*, 161.

<sup>12</sup> Sel. Com. to Clive, 21st June, 1765, *vide*, Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1765, pp. 80-83.

Clive left Calcutta for Allahabad on 25th June and on 1st July the select committee set forth in clear terms the main objects of his Lordship's mission. "We have invested his Lordship in conjunction with you," wrote the committee to Carnac, "with full powers to negotiate with Shuja Dowlah and the country powers and you will perceive from the tenor of our instructions that our great aim is to obtain a lasting and *honourable peace, to revive our languishing commerce, to impress the natives with a sense of our justice and moderation and to reduce those heavy military charges which have hitherto rendered our extra-ordinary success and even the cession of rich provinces fruitless to the Company.*"<sup>13</sup> Having transacted on the way some urgent administrative business relating to Bengal and carrying on a long formal correspondence with Shah Alam and Shuja, Clive, charged with this important duty, reached Benares on 1st August and was received with full military honours, a salute of 19 guns being fired and all the troops being drawn.<sup>14</sup>

### 5. The Conferences with the Wazir and the Emperor.

The very next day he had a conference with Shuja-ud-daulah "in which he expressed the utmost joy at having his country restored, and gratitude for such generous behaviour in a victorious enemy." The amount of indemnity as settled by Carnac was approved of and the mode and time limit for payment were discussed and finally laid down. Of the fifty lakhs of rupees stipulated upon, Shuja agreed to pay ten lakhs in cash and ten lakhs more in jewels at the time of the conclusion of the treaty, five lakhs on being put in possession of his country and the remaining twenty-five lakhs in 12 months.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Carnac, 1st July, 1765, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1765, p. 94.

<sup>14</sup> Clive to Sel. Com. dated Benares, 1st August, 1765, in Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1765, pp. 141-42.

<sup>15</sup> Clive & Carnac to Sel. Com. dated Benares, 3rd August, 1765, *vide*, Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1765, p. 145; *Malcolm's Clive*, III. 125-26.

Two or three meetings of the conference were enough to conclude this important business and now Clive decided to hasten to Allahabad in order to discuss terms with the emperor and expedite the conclusion of treaties with him and with the wazir. "As the king is very slow in all his motions," wrote he to Sykes on 3rd August, "we think the only way of shortening matters will be to wait on his Majesty at Illiabad." His desire was to fix the royal tribute from Bengal at Rupees 20 lakhs annually ; but as Carnac had been in favour of 26 lakhs—the sum demanded by the emperor and promised by the late Mir Jafar sometime back—he agreed to the latter sum, if Shah Alam were to insist on it. "I think 20 sufficient," he wrote to Sykes, "however as we intend to make use of His Majesty in a very extra-ordinary manner for obtaining nothing less than a *Sunnud* for all the revenues of the country, 6 lakhs of rupees will be scarce worth our disobliging the king, if he should make a point of it."<sup>16</sup> With these settled views, Clive and party left Benares on the 4th and arrived at Allahabad on the 9th and held more than one conference with the emperor the same day. By an agreement between him and the Fort William authorities in December 1764, Shah Alam was promised to be put in possession of the whole of Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions save the state of Balwant Singh, which, by way of fulfilling his part of the agreement, the emperor had conferred upon the company by an imperial *farman*. Now, he expressed his strong dissatisfaction when he was informed that he would have to content himself with only two districts of the wazir's *subahs*, namely Kora and Allahabad. Although he acquiesced in this, he wrote to Clive requesting that all business relating to Bengal should be settled through Shitab Rai and the tribute might be paid month by month, that he should not be pressed to appoint Najaf Khan, who was unfit for business, as his manager for the districts of Allahabad

<sup>16</sup> Clive to Sykes, Benares 3rd August, 1765, *vide, Forrest's Clive*, II pp. 281-82 ; Powis MSS. *vide, Clive II*. 281. Carnac had been offered a present of two lakhs of rupees by Shah Alam. (*Clive*, II. 283).

and Kora and that as he was anxious to march to Delhi after the rainy season an English officer with a powerful force might be appointed to accompany him. On Clive's arrival at Allahabad the emperor presented in Persian a paper of his demands that as agreed to by the late Nawab of Bengal the company should pay him tribute at the rate of 26 lakhs of rupees annually together with an annual sum of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs in commutation of the income of the jagirs of some imperial officers in Bengal and that the company should further discharge the arrears of tribute, that is, 32 lakhs, and put him in *absolute* possession of Kora and Allahabad districts.<sup>17</sup> He was, however, persuaded to relinquish the jagir and arrear items, though not without reluctance. He was further constrained to agree to allow Najaf Khan a handsome stipend from his own revenues from Bengal and to grant *sanads* (patents of appointment) of *nizamat* (governership) and *diwani* for Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to Najm-ud-daulah of Bengal and to the English East India company respectively. "He expressed warmth," writes Mill, "and even resentment, upon the hardness of these arbitrary conditions; but the necessities of the humbled monarch left him without means of relief."<sup>18</sup>

#### 6. The grant of Diwani to the Company, 12th August, 1765.

The terms as finally settled were that Shah Alam was to be put in possession of the districts of Allahabad and Kora, yielding an annual revenue of 10 lakhs and 18 lakhs respectively, that he was to appoint Najaf Khan (whom he distrusted) as the manager of these districts and allot to him an allowance of two lakhs of rupees out of the tribute from Bengal, and that he was to reside and hold his court at Allahabad under the protection of the company. Further he was to issue imperial *farmans* conferring *diwani* of the three provinces

<sup>17</sup> C. P. C., I. 2687; Carnac & Clive to Sel. Com., Allahabad, 12th August, 1765, *vide*, Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. 1765, pp. 147-48.

<sup>18</sup> Mill, Vol. III. 286.



on the company and recognising Najm-ud-daulah as nawab, while Clive on behalf of the company bound himself to remit regularly the annual tribute of 26 lakhs of rupees to the royal treasury. Although like the term requiring the emperor to reside at Allahabad, it was not reduced to writing, it is clear that Clive promised to appoint a part of the English army to conduct the emperor to Delhi at the end of the rainy season of 1766.<sup>19</sup>

Now an impressive ceremony was observed to complete the epoch-making transaction with due solemnities. On the historic day of 12th August, 1765, memorable in the annals of the English East India company, Shah Alam II took his seat on a throne in the English camp. "It did not stand like the famous throne of his ancestors, on six massive feet of gold inlaid with rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, but on an English dining table. The body was not of solid gold emblazoned with priceless gems, but an arm-chair covered with some drapery."<sup>20</sup> Lord Clive, Carnac and other principal British officers together with the members of the imperial court stood like humble suppliants after the manner of the Mughal nobles of yore, and the emperor graciously handed over to Clive his royal *farmans* in Persian, conferring upon the company the *diwani* of the three provinces. By another *farman* the governorship of these *subahs* was bestowed on Najm-ud-daulah.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> C. P. C., I. 2688 ; *Shigarf-nama*, 3b.

<sup>20</sup> Forrest's *Clive*, II. 286.

<sup>21</sup> The following is the English rendering of the Company's *Magna Carta*, made at the time for *Clive* and Council :—

*Firmaund from the King Shah Aahum, granting the Dewany of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to the Company, 1765.*

"At this happy time our royal Firmaund, indispensably requiring obedience is issued ; that whereas, in consideration of the attachment and services of the high and mighty, the noblest of exalted nobles, the chief of illustrious warriors, our faithful servants and sincere well-wishers, worthy of our royal favours, the English Company, we have granted them the Dewany of the Provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, from the beginning of the Fussul Rubby of the Bengal year 1172 as a free gift and *ultumgat*, without the association of any other person and

Shah Alam gave away to the company what was hardly his to give, and this epoch-making document merely recognised and registered what had long ago become an accomplished fact. And yet, paradoxical though it may appear, the Fort William authorities and Clive had since 1760 been very anxious to secure some such recognition of their position in Bengal by a fiat of this imperial phantom. However powerful, the company's position in Bengal before the royal grant was that of an usurper in the eyes of European powers as well as in those of the Indian world. "Low as the fortune of the Mogul had fallen," rightly remarks the historian H. Beveridge, "he was still nominally supreme and continued to be appealed to as the valid disposer of kingdoms, long after he had ceased to have any real authority within them. It was desirable, therefore, that the Company in appropriating the whole civil and military power of the three provinces should

with an exemption from the payment of the customs of the Dewanny which used to be paid to the court. It is requisite that the said company engage to be security for the sum of twenty-six lakhs of rupees a year for our royal revenue, which sum has been appointed from the Nabob Nujmud-Dowlah Behauder, and regularly remit the same to the royal circar; and in this case, as the said company are obliged to keep up a large army for the protection of the Provinces of Bengal, etc., we have granted to them whatsoever may remain out of the revenues of the said Provinces, after remitting the sum of twenty-six lakhs of rupees to the royal circar and providing for the expenses of the Nizamat. It is requisite that our royal descendants, the Viziers, the bestowers of dignity, the Omrahs, high in rank, the great officers, the Muttaseddees of the Dewanny, the managers of the business of the Sultanut, the Jaghirdars and Croories, as well the future as the present, using their constant endeavours for the establishment of this our royal command, leave the said office in possession of the said company, from generation to generation, for ever and ever; looking upon them to be insured from dismissal or removal, they must on no account what-so-ever, give them any interruption, and they must regard them, as excused and exempted from the payment of all the Customs of the Dewanny and royal demands. Knowing our orders on the subject to be most strict and positive let them not deviate therefrom."

Written the 24th of Sophar, of the 6th year of the Jaloos (the 12th of August, 1765) (*vide Aitchison*, Vol. II. 24).

obtain his sanction.”<sup>22</sup> The *farman* of the 12th August not only appointed the company *diwan* of the three eastern provinces, which carried with it the duties of the settlement of land, collection of all kinds of revenues and administration of civil justice, but also thereby conferred upon it for the first time the status of an Indian power. Its importance, therefore, cannot be over-estimated.

### 7. The treaty with Shuja-ud-daulah, 16th August, 1765.

The treaty of friendship and alliance between nawab Najm-ud-daulah and the English East India company on the one hand and Shuja-ud-daulah on the other was formally concluded on the 16th August. By the first article of this treaty “perpetual and universal peace, sincere friendship and firm union” were established between the contracting parties. The second article laid down that in case of the invasion of the dominion of any one member of the parties, the other should help him with a part or the whole of his force. “In the case of the English Company’s forces being employed in His Highness’ (Shuja’s) service, the extraordinary expense of the same is to be defrayed by him.” Nothing was, however, mentioned regarding the expenses of the wazir’s troops, if they were employed on a similar mission in the company’s service. Thirdly, Shuja-ud-daulah agreed never to entertain or receive Mir Qasim, Samru or any other European deserter of the company in his *subahs* and to deliver up all future European deserters from the company. Fourthly, he bound himself to cede the districts of Kora and Allahabad to emperor Shah Alam II. Fifthly, he guaranteed Balwant Singh of Benares all his *zamindari* he possessed at the time of his joining the English on the condition of his paying him the same revenue as heretofore. Sixthly, he agreed to pay to the company a war indemnity of fifty lakhs of rupees, of which 12 lakhs in cash and 8 lakhs in jewels were to be paid immediately, 5 lakhs one month after the conclusion of the

<sup>22</sup> *A Comprehensive History of India* by H. Beveridge, Vol. I. pp. 691-92.

treaty and the remaining 25 lakhs by monthly instalments, the whole to be discharged in 13 months from the date of the treaty. Seventhly, the fort of Chunar was to remain in possession of the English until the last instalment of the indemnity was paid off by the wazir. Eighthly, the wazir allowed the company to trade duty free in his country. Ninthly, Shuja-ud-daulah promised to forgive and not to molest all those subjects of his who had in any way assisted the English during the late war. Tenthly, it was agreed that as soon as the treaty was executed all the company's troops, except those necessary for garrisoning Chunar-garh and for the protection of the emperor at Allahabad should be withdrawn from Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions. And finally the parties solemnly bound themselves to observe the terms of the treaty faithfully.<sup>23</sup> The treaty was "signed, sealed and solemnly sworn, according to their respective faiths by the contracting parties" at Allahabad and it was approved by Shah Alam II, who affixed his own seal to it.

Except in regard to article number 8, which, as originally drafted, allowed the establishment of English factories with their concomitants (e.g., gumashtas and troops, etc.) in Shuja's dominion, little difficulty was encountered in the negotiations and settlement of the above terms. Dreading the consequences of establishment of factories, the wazir strongly opposed the inclusion of that part of the article and Clive, therefore, agreed to the omission of the objectionable clause. "It gives us the real concern to acquaint you," wrote Clive and Carnac to the select committee, "that Shuja Dowlah expressed the greatest reluctance at consenting to the 8th Article. He frankly confessed that our encroachments in Bengal with regard to trade and great abuses and exactions committed by the company's servants, and others coun-

<sup>23</sup> *I. O. Cons.*, 1765, pp. 138-142. Most of the Persian authorities such as *Siyar*, *T. M.*, *Kalyan*, etc., give a general description of the terms of the treaty. Only Khair-ud-din, p. 162 and Sawanihat give the terms in detail. There are a few mistakes in the version given by these authorities.

tenanced by them, made him apprehensive of the consequences in his own dominions and that he dreaded much our having factories, etc., would, if anything could, cause a rupture betwixt us; in short the Nabob expressed so much uneasiness about the word *Factories* particularly, that at last we agreed to leave it out, as you will observe in the treaty, and indeed we cannot help thinking from the appearance of things at present that we had better withdraw the factory of Benares altogether when Bulwant Singh's engagement to the Company expires."<sup>24</sup>

#### 8. The agreement between the Emperor, Najm-ud-daulah and the Company, 19th August, 1765.

On the 19th August an agreement was made between the company and Najm-ud-daulah on the one hand and the emperor on the other relating to the tribute to be paid to the latter from Bengal. Najm-ud-daulah "agreed to pay to his Majesty out of the revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the sum of 26 lacs of rupees a year, without any deduction for *batta* on bills of exchange, by regular monthly payments, amounting to 216,666-10-9 per month; the first payment to commence from the 1st September of the present year; and the English Company in consideration of His Majesty's having been graciously pleased to grant them Dewanny of Bengal, etc., do engage themselves to be security for the regular payment of the same. It shall be paid month by month from the factory at Patna to Raja Shitabroy, or whomsoever His Majesty may think proper to nominate, that it may be forwarded by him to the court. But in case the territories of the aforesaid Nabob should be invaded by any foreign enemy, a deduction is then to be made out of the stipulated revenues, proportionable to the damage that may be sustained."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Clive & Carnac to Sel. Com., Allahabad, 20th August, 1765, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. 1765, p. 149; Powis MSS. quoted by Forrest, *vide* Clive II. 289-90.

<sup>25</sup> Articles of agreement between Shah Alam and the Company *vide*, Aitchison's Treaties, Bengal—No. 10—1765, Vol. II. p. 244.



The emperor bound himself, by a second article, to pay two lakhs of rupees per annum to Mirza Najaf Khan for the assistance he had given to the English and Shah Alam during the late war with Shuja-ud-daulah. The sum was to be paid by monthly instalments every year and the first payment was to be made on the 1st September, 1765. In case of default "the English Company, who are guarantees for the same, will make it good out of the revenues allotted to His Majesty from the territories of Bengal." If Bengal were invaded and a deduction be made on that account out of the imperial tribute, "in such a case a proportionable deduction shall also be made out of Nudjuf Khan's allowances."<sup>26</sup>

Clive also managed to secure in a formal manner the imperial recognition of the company's possessions in Bengal and elsewhere in the country. At his request the emperor issued a royal *farman* laying down "that the *Chucklas* of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong and also twenty-four Pergunnahs of Calcutta, etc., (the zamindari of the English Company, which were granted to the said Company in the time of Meer Mohamed Kossium, and Meer Mohamed Jaffer Khan, deceased), he confirmed to the said Company as a free gift and *ultumgau*, without the association of any persons." Similar *farmans* were issued confirming to the company Clive's Jagir and all the grants of land they had received from the nawab of Karnatak.<sup>27</sup> The Northern Sarkars which Clive and Forde had conquered from the French after the battle of Plassey were also confirmed.

After the conclusion of these memorable treaties, Clive accompanied by Carnac and Shuja-ud-daulah, started back to Benares, leaving colonel Richard Smith in charge of a portion of the British army to be stationed at Allahabad for the protection of the emperor. The party reached Benares on 23rd August, and here they parted, Clive resuming his march to Patna *en-route* for Calcutta, while Shuja-ud-daulah

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Aitchison's *Treaties*, etc., Bengal—No. X. 1765, Vol. II. p. 248; Aitchison, the Carnatic—No. 11—1763, Vol. X. p. 42.

returning to Faizabad and Lucknow after close upon eight months' exile from his dominions.

### 9. Reflection on the Treaties of Allahabad.

The treaties of Allahabad constitute a land-mark of supreme importance in the annals of the company and introduce an epoch of far-reaching consequences in that of India in general and Oudh in particular. Besides definitely closing the chapter of a prolonged and bloody struggle, they clearly defined the relations of the company with its neighbours and laid the foundation of an honourable and lasting peace with them. In fact they brought about a momentous change in the company's status in India. The imperial *farman* conferring upon the company the *diwani* of the three provinces and rightly designated as the Magna Carta of that trading organisation, with it conferred upon it the legal position and status of an Indian power and a definite place in the body politic of the Mughal Empire. "This is," writes Burke, "the great act of the constitutional entrance of the Company into the body politic of India. It gave to the settlement of Bengal a fixed constitutional form, with a legal title, acknowledged and recognized now for the first time from the charter of the undoubted sovereign."<sup>28</sup> The English became absolute masters in the eyes of the Indian world, of certain of their possessions ceded to them by the late governors of Bengal and Karnatik, not by right of cession or conquest, but by reason of the imperial decrees issued at Allahabad. The documents embodying the settlements of these weighty problems and privileges must claim a premier rank among the treaties of the company with Indian powers.

The settlement with Oudh was the most permanent achievement of the conference. No successor of Shuja-ud-daulah down to the very end of his dynasty presumed to raise his head in defiance of the British might, and Oudh continued to remain first a "buffer State" and then a

<sup>28</sup> Burke, Vol. IX. 441.

subordinate State till the last day of its political extinction in 1856. In the treaty between the company and Shuja-ud-daulah the observant eye can detect the germ of a subsidiary alliance, a policy that subsequently immortalised the period of Lord Wellesley's governor-generalship. Though Shuja-ud-daulah was nominally recognised as an equal power with the company at the time of the treaty, he became in effect a subordinate and protected ally, if not a tribute paying vassal, and some of the articles furnished a plausible plea for interference with his administration and with some of his pet schemes, and if not he, at least his successors sank, gradually but steadily, into a position of positive inferiority to the company's supreme agents in India and eventually the later rulers on the *gaddi* of Lucknow dwindled into mere tools in the hands of the governor-general and became his instruments in the expansion of the British power in the country.

Shuja-ud-daulah was lucky in having been granted very favourable terms,—terms much more liberal than he could have reasons to expect from an enemy with whom he had fought a life-and-death struggle and whom he had resolved to expel from Bengal bag and baggage. The wisdom and far-sightedness of the British *policy* which dictated this lenient treatment cannot be adequately praised. But it should be borne in mind that this leniency was not so much due to generosity for a fallen enemy as to the dictates of policy. The company's one supreme object at this juncture was the safety and permanence of their possessions of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa,—an object that could be realised only by "the formation of such a frontier as could give the best security against foreign invasion and afford necessary leisure for the introduction of important internal improvements." None, Shah Alam not excepting, save Shuja with his natural talent, experience and hereditary position, was thought to be "capable of interposing an effective barrier" between those *subahs* and the Marathas who had long been anxious to acquire a foothold in them. "When our servants after the battle of Buxar planned the extirpation of Shuja from his

dominions and the giving the same up to the King [Shah Alam]," runs the Company's despatch, dated May 13, 1768, "Lord Clive soon discerned the King would have been unable to maintain them, and it would have destroyed the strongest barrier against the Marathas and the northern powers and therefore wisely restored Shuja to his dominions."<sup>29</sup> "To fit him (*Shuja*) for the part thus assigned him," writes the historian Beveridge, "it was necessary not only to leave his strength unimpaired but to convince him, by generous treatment, that he could not advance his interest more effectually than by linking his own fortunes with those of the Company and entering into close alliance with them."<sup>30</sup> It will thus be seen that it was not justice or generosity but policy that was really responsible for Shuja's restoration. This wise policy, though marred by an unbecoming attitude of jealousy and suspicion of the wazir's rising power on the part of Clive's immediate successors, was abundantly justified by its results. On the whole Oudh continued to remain to the end a faithful ally of the company and materially contributed to the expansion of the British power in India.

The settlement made with the emperor is even more striking. It reduced Shah Alam to the status of a mere pensioner of the company. The political arrangement with him was less satisfactory and naturally it did not evoke the chorus of praise with which the solution of the problem of relationship with Shuja-ud-daulah had been received. Considering the peculiar circumstances of the case and the difficulties of Clive, it can at best be pronounced to have been a temporary political expedient. But even as such it is open to criticism on political and moral grounds. Without any stretch of imagination, it could have been seen that Shah Alam, who was still nominally the emperor of the whole of the country, would not resist the temptation of marching to Delhi and occupying his ancestral capital and throne. Indeed within a year of the treaty, he got tired of the galling

<sup>29</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Dec. 13, 1768.

<sup>30</sup> *A Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. I. p. 695.

tutelage of colonel Smith, the head of the company's troops at Allahabad, and this together with his natural desire of attaining to full sovereignty and the failing health and resignation of Najib-ud-daulah the dictator at Delhi, obliged him to eagerly lend his ears to the Maratha overtures for installing him on his forefathers' throne, and before the year 1771 had come to an end he was at the gates of the imperial capital. Clive's political arrangement was thus broken and Warren Hastings was faced with an ugly situation on the assumption of the office of governorship in April, 1772. As regards the charges that Clive treated in a cavalierly fashion a monarch in distress and that he threw away a golden opportunity of establishing the company's rule over Delhi and the whole of India by not taking possession of the capital in the name of Shah Alam, these may be dismissed as the objections of the political theorist. Even if he had been given the whole of the Allahabad province, it is doubtful whether Shah Alam would have preferred to remain for ever as the company's pensioner at Allahabad to the prospects and the glamour of ruling at his ancestral metropolis. Howsoever feasible from the military point of view, an expedition to Delhi would have been nothing short of a great political blunder, as it might have united the whole of the country against the company. A real and great moral objection against the arrangement is that it violated the terms of a former treaty with the emperor without any special reason save the plea of expediency. Only a few months before the treaty of Allahabad the Fort William authorities (Spencer and Council) had entered into an agreement with Shah Alam II, promising to put him in possession of the whole of Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions, if the emperor granted to the company the State of Benares, then in the possession of Balwant Singh, and Shah Alam had readily fulfilled his part of the agreement.<sup>31</sup> At Allahabad, however, he was told that he would have now to content himself with only two districts out of the two *subahs* and

<sup>31</sup> *Vide* Vol. I. pp. 257-58.



he had to acquiesce without delay. It is interesting to note that during the course of the negotiations Clive solemnly pledged his word for an armed assistance to the emperor in his enterprise to march to Delhi if a necessary sanction could be obtained from the king of England. On Clive's suggestion a letter was drafted and a Muslim envoy of noble birth named Aitisam-ud-din was sent to England along with captain Swinton to represent Shah Alam's case before his Britannic Majesty. After 2 years and 9 months' absence Aitisam-ud-din returned from London without having realised the object of his mission. He was not allowed to approach George III and the presents, valued at a lakh of rupees, sent by the Mughal Lord and intended for the king of England were either pocketed or made by Clive as if they had been offered by him and from his own pocket, without any reference to the name of Shah Alam of India. No wonder that Aitisam-ud-din and Swinton charged Clive with "breach of faith." (Lord Clive *bad ahdi wa dagha namud.*)<sup>34</sup> To the

<sup>32</sup> Aitisam-ud-din was the first educated Indian to go to England, and he took with him a Muslim menial servant who acted as his cook and valet. They together with captain Swinton left Calcutta in 1180 A.H. (sometime in 1766 A.D.) and reached London after six months' voyage. Aitisam-ud-din returned to Bengal in 1183 A.H. (1769 A.D.) He wrote an account of his experiences in England in a book in Persian (composed in 1781 A.D.) to which he gave the name of *Shigarf-nama*. A copy of this unique manuscript is preserved in the Victoria Hall Library of Udaipur. This is the first book written by an Indian about the English people, their country, their manners, customs, education, government and so on. The author charges Clive with treachery. He says that after he had been on board the ship for a week, he was informed by Swinton that Clive had withheld Shah Alam's letter on the ground that the presents intended for George III had not been yet sent and he (Clive) himself would bring both the letter and the presents with him the following year. Aitisam-ud-din waited in London, for one year and six months. When Clive had returned to London he presented one lakh of rupees given to him by Shah Alam to George, as if they were a present from his Lordship and did not mention anything about the letter from the Mughal emperor. Aitisam-ud-din was greatly disappointed at Clive's conduct and some time after set sail on his return journey to India (See *Shigarf-nama*, pp. 3b-5b).

modern student of the period, the story of his Lordship's this act makes a sickening study and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that he played this dirty trick to make Shah Alam agree to the harsh terms he was dictating at Allahabad without strong protests from him.

The settlement as a whole being a compromise between the conflicting interests of the parties and particularly those of Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-daulah furnished a potent cause of discord between the emperor and his wazir,—an important fact that has hitherto escaped the attention of historians. Shuja-ud-daulah's timely submission, rightly thought Shah Alam, had spoiled the imperial game of getting for himself the whole of the dominions of the wazir, while the latter consistently complained that the emperor's intrigues were responsible for the tearing away of Allahabad and Kora from his territory, and the consequent bitterness,<sup>33</sup> a direct sequel of the Allahabad settlement, continued to exist till a year before Shah Alam's final departure for Delhi in April, 1771.

<sup>33</sup> For this bitterness see C. P. C., II. 377-1275.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE RESTORATION AND CONSOLIDATION

#### 1. How Shuja managed to pay the first instalment of the war indemnity.

A great problem that now faced Shuja-ud-daulah was how to get together twenty lakhs of rupees that he had agreed to pay to the English immediately on the conclusion of the treaty in part payment of fifty lakhs imposed upon him by Clive. His treasury had been exhausted and his resources were at this time nil. But the liability had to be discharged before the treaty could be enforced, and therefore from Allahabad Shuja had already written to his mother, wife, relations, friends and chief officers, beseeching them to spare whatever ready money, jewels and other precious articles they could, as the restoration of his dominions depended upon the fulfilment of this, the very first obligation, and indicating the sum that he expected from each one of them. Most of these persons, including his mother and brothers-in-law and numerous hereditary officials who had made fortune in his service, evaded full compliance and sent one-half to one-fourth of what they had been in a position to afford or of what had been expected of them. But the wazir's wife, Bahu Begam, deservedly celebrated for her fidelity, delivered to her husband, despite the advice of some time-serving flatterers to the contrary, everything of value that she possessed,—cash, jewels, gold and silver plates and costly furniture and even the ornaments on her person, including her nose-ring with its bunch of pearls. She rebuked and silenced her foolish advisers by saying, "Whatever I have is of use to me so long as Shuja-ud-daulah is safe. If he ceases to live all these things (wealth

and ornaments) would also cease to be of value to me."<sup>1</sup> On their receipt Shuja got the value of the jewels, plates and ornaments estimated with Shitab Rai's help and these together with some cash, all valued at twenty lakhs, were made over to Clive. The wazir further gave "a *Tuncaw* (tankhwah or an assignment) for twenty lakhs of rupees upon Bulwant Singh in security for payment of the remainder of the indemnification."<sup>2</sup> He then saw Clive off at Benares, and returning to Allahabad took leave of the emperor and set out for his capital.

## 2. Shuja re-enters Oudh ; his new problems.

With a composed mind Shuja-ud-daulah now re-entered Faizabad on 22nd August and undertook a tour of his provinces in order to take charge of the country from the departing British troops. It took him a week to rearrange and refashion the administration of the capital after which he started (28th) for Lucknow, transacting important administrative and military business relating to the *parganahs* and the towns, on the way. With the aid of a battalion of the company's army, lent to him for the purpose, he brought the whole of his dominions *minus* Kora and Allahabad in his possession within a few weeks, though full order and peace could not be restored till some months later.<sup>3</sup> His most pressing need was a new powerful force which he could trust. Shuja's recent experience of his Mughals, officers as well as rank and file, who had been in treacherous collusion with the British during the late war and many of whom had deserted him to join the enemy, had rightly prejudiced him against the whole race of these mercenaries. He now dismissed most of those that had still remained in his service, though the allowances paid to some who claimed kin-ship with the nawab were not stopped. Many of the disbanded Mughals, notable among

<sup>1</sup> *Siyar* II. 770 ; also *Kalyan* 156b.

<sup>2</sup> Clive and Carnac to Com., 20th Aug., 1765, Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. 1765, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> C. P. C., I. 2073, 2753.

whom were Musavi Khan (son of Siyadat Khan, elder brother of Burhan-ul-mulk), Muhammad Ali Khan and Abdul-mutab Khan, took service under Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-daulah recruited fresh and healthy troops to fill their places.<sup>4</sup>

Shuja-ud daulah's rule had hardly been re-established before he found himself worried by English interference with the local administration of Benares. It will be recalled that he had stoutly opposed Clive's proposal of the inclusion in the Allahabad treaty of a clause permitting the establishment of English factories in his dominions on the ground that it would lead to a quarrel between the parties. It now became clear that his fears were not without foundation. Marriot, the chief of the English factory at Benares, and his colleagues occasioned a disturbance in the local mint, allowed Shuja "no manner of authority in it" and interfered with the wazir's government. On the latter's remonstrance, Marriot falsely alleged that he had been authorised by the emperor to look after the mint. Realising the helplessness of his situation, Shuja-ud-daulah lodged more than one complaint with Clive, and the Bengal select committee promptly directed Marriot "to confine yourself strictly to the collection of the *Tancaws* (assignment money) for which purpose alone your residence at Benares is continued; and by no means to meddle directly or indirectly with any affairs which are not immediately relative to your appointment." Although falsely denouncing Shuja's charges as groundless, Marriot had to obey and promise that he would take care to see that the wazir had no reason for complaint. Clive's strong arm thus nipped the evil in the bud and Shuja was no longer harassed by the English traders of Benares.<sup>5</sup>

For some time after his restoration, external fear, probably more imaginary than real, continued to haunt the wazir who had received vague reports that the Marathas were devising schemes for an invasion of his country. As the arrival of

<sup>4</sup> *Imad*, 99 ; *Sawanihat*, I. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Marriot, 29th Oct., 1765 ; Sel. Com. Progs. 22nd Nov., 1765 ; C. P. C., I. 2730, 2758.



military succour from Calcutta, which he was entitled to requisition in terms of the late treaty, was likely to cause delay, he requested Clive (October) to issue standing orders to col. Smith at Allahabad, directing him to join the wazir with his troops if and when his territories were invaded by the Marathas or any other power. In compliance with this request the Calcutta authorities instructed Smith (25th Oct.) to co-operate with the wazir "to prevent the ingress of the Marathas and preserve the tranquillity of the country." Some days after on his representation that the emperor was negotiating with Malhar Rao Holkar and was willing to cede Kora and Allahabad to him in return for the Maratha promise of installing him on his ancestral throne, Smith was instructed by the select committee to remonstrate with Shah Alam and to support Shuja in the event of an invasion of his *subahs*, for which service the latter would pay extraordinary expenses.<sup>6</sup> No Maratha invasion, however, occurred at the time and consequently the necessity of the use of British troops did not arise.

### 3. The so-called Congress of Chhaprah, June, 1766.

Within a month or two of the treaty of Allahabad Shah Alam, who was naturally eager to attain to full sovereignty by regaining his ancestral capital and throne and thus getting rid of English tutelage, sought the assistance of Malhar Rao Holkar for the realisation of his ambition and is said to have promised him in return the cession of the Allahabad and Kora districts. His negotiations alarmed Shuja-ud-daulah who, fearing the Maratha proximity to his dominion, appealed to Clive to allow the British army at Allahabad to co-operate with him in an emergency for the defence of Oudh. The English, who at once detested and feared the Marathas, promptly complied with Shuja's request, refused the emperor the loan of troops and guns for which he had repeatedly asked, and strongly remonstrated with him in their endeavour

<sup>6</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 25th Oct., 1765; Com's. letter to Smith, 29th Oct., 1765; C. P. C., I. 2727, 2728, 2730.

to persuade him to give up what they termed the "wild project" of seating himself on the Delhi throne. Shah Alam, however, would not be so easily persuaded. He left Allahabad in December, 1765, accompanied by Smith (who was permitted by the select committee to escort him as far as Kora); but had to return from the latter town in April 1766, as his negotiations with the Marathas broke down owing to English hostility to the enterprise and their utter refusal to enter into any understanding with the Deccanis.<sup>7</sup>

Greatly disturbed at the menacing prospect of an alliance between the emperor and the Marathas, the Bengal select committee resolved on 28th February 1766 to despatch a large portion of the company's second brigade from Allahabad to be stationed at Shivarajpur on the Ganges, about 104 miles north-west of Allahabad and to form a confederacy of Shuja-ud-daulah, the Ruhelas, the Jats and the English to checkmate that alliance. "His (emperor's proposed) treaty with the Marattoes," wrote the committee to Smith, "must necessarily produce disturbances that may probably extend to Shujah Dowlah's dominions and even to these provinces. This danger we think it absolutely necessary to avert by forming a league between Shujah Dowlah, the Rohilla Chiefs and the Jats to oppose the Marattoes in every attempt to gain a footing on this side of the Jamuna or to break the public tranquillity so happily established." On the 13th March Clive and Carnac were authorised to discuss and decide the terms of the proposed confederacy in a personal interview with Shuja and the other powers.<sup>8</sup> The select committee's resolution was based on a correct knowledge of the political situation and mutual relations of the north Indian powers. The Ruhelas were afraid of an alliance between Shah Alam

<sup>7</sup> C. P. C., I. 2718, 2725, 2781, 2785 A. B. C. & D., 2754, 2759; Ben. Sel. Com. to Smith, 29th Oct., 22nd Nov., 2nd Dec., 1765; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 10th April, 1766; S. P. D. XXIX, 99, 102, 107, 138; *Ghulam Ali*, II. 251-53.

<sup>8</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 28th Feb. & 13th March, 1766, *vide* Vol. of year 1766, pp. 21 and 41-2.

and the Marathas, for they feared that they would be made to surrender the Maratha territory in the Doab which they had usurped after their defeat at Panipat. Jawahar Singh Jat too was alarmed as he rightly believed that he would be the first to be made to feel the full weight of a Maratha invasion as soon as the latter had managed to cover their personal ambition under the mask of imperial sanction.<sup>9</sup> Nor were the English fears of the Marathas altogether groundless. Many a patriotic Maratha was feeling keenly how the English traders had managed to become rulers by making and unmaking 'nawabs' in Bengal, by keeping the emperor as a pliable tool in their hands and by compelling Shuja-ud-daulah to sink into the position of a vassal of the company whose agents were harassing pilgrims to holy Benares by levying pilgrims' tax and other hated duties, and was urging the Peshwa to undertake a conquest of Bengal.<sup>10</sup> Clive and his colleagues, who seem to have been fully aware of these sentiments, wrote to the secret committee of Fort St. George that the Marathas were "the only power in Indostan who have either the means or the inclination to disturb us," and advised the Madras government to settle their disputes with the Nizam of Hyderabad and make a common cause with him (the Nizam) against the Marathas.<sup>11</sup>

Accompanied by Carnac, Strachey and Ingham, Clive reached Chhaprah early in June, where Shuja-ud-daulah arrived on the 8th. Here a conference was held in the second week of the month and among the notables present were besides the above-mentioned personages, Balwant Singh, Shitab Rai, Munir-ud-daulah (emperor's representative) and agents of the Ruhela chiefs, of the Jat rajah, and the Marathas. In conformity with the usage of polite Indian society of the time the congress was a pageant and its members concealed their business behind a barrage of stately banquets and gorgeous

<sup>9</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 10th Feb., 1766.

<sup>10</sup> S. P. D. XXIX, 110, 111.

<sup>11</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Gov. and Sec. Com. Fort St. George, 17th Oct., 1766, *vide*, Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1766, p. 221.

female dances, grand illuminations and brilliant display of fire-works. Shuja entertained Clive and other guests to a banquet, music and dances which vied with the festivities and splendour of the Delhi court of the 17th century, while Clive invited the wazir and party to an equally sumptuous feast and a display of English drill and a mock-fight of the company's troops, which pleased Shuja so much that he lavishly rewarded the English gunners with money. Similar entertainments were given by Shitab Rai.<sup>12</sup>

The congress proved to be a qualified success, as it abandoned its main object, *viz.*, a defensive alliance with the Ruhelas and the Jats. Clive realising the soundness of Shuja-ud-daulah's views that these distant powers would not assist the English in time of danger, gave up the policy of entering into definite treaty engagements with them obviously because there was no immediate danger from the Marathas. As regards those chiefs whose alliance might be useful but the assembling of whose agents would have detained Clive at Chhaprah for many months, Shuja-ud-daulah was entrusted with "the management of each treaties (*sic*) as he may think convenient for his own and the Company's welfare ; but he is not to conclude anything nor enter into any absolute engagements without previously acquainting the President with every proposal and obtaining his approbation".<sup>13</sup> The most important achievements of the conference were the final settlement of the relations between Oudh and the Benares State and Shuja's clearing off the balance of the war indemnity in fulfilment of the article sixth of the treaty of Allahabad. Now the State of Benares, which had been given in assignment to the English by Shuja till the payment of the last pie of the indemnity reverted to him from July, 1766, and on the recommendation of Clive and against the real desire of Shuja, who wanted to be left free to impose any terms he liked on the rajah, an agreement was entered

<sup>12</sup> T. M., 251b ; *Kalyan*, 164a ; *Siyar*, II. 778.

<sup>13</sup> Clive and Carnac to Ben. Sel. Com., 14th July, 1766, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 12th Aug., 1766.



into between the nawab and Balwant whereby the latter was confirmed in his zamindari as a vassal of Oudh on his agreeing to pay regularly an annual revenue of 19,98,449 rupees. Clive, however, accorded his verbal assent to Shuja's proposal that the rajah should pay him a *pesh-kash* of three lakhs of rupees as the price of his confirmation.<sup>14</sup> Similarly the fort of Chunar should have, in accordance with the terms of the treaty, been delivered back to Shuja ; but while Clive issued orders to put the wazir in possession of it by withdrawing European troops, it was agreed that the company's sepoys would remain in the fort until the second brigade had been withdrawn from Allahabad where only one battalion was to be left for the protection of Shah Alam. In compliance with Shuja's request Clive allowed a battalion under captain Hill to attend him and all its charges were to be paid by the wazir. From this very date began the process of the accumulation of these military charges which in course of time brought Oudh under the company's debt and became a most potent cause of the subsequent shrinkage of the Oudh kingdom and complete loss of its independence. So favourably was Clive impressed by Shuja-ud-daulah's sincerity and loyalty as an ally to the British that at Chhaprah he took the opportunity of recommending him to the emperor through Munir-ud-daulah for his reappointment as wazir and soon after the conclusion of the conference he and Carnac expressed their views about him in these words :—"His (Shuja's) own interests indeed, particularly the preservation and protection of his family and riches in case of need render him an ally much to be depended upon and we must in due justice add that if a due sensibility of favours received, an open confidence and many other valuable principles are to be

<sup>14</sup> Aitchison's *Treaties*, Benares, No. XX. pp. 45-6. *Siyar* (778) gives 24 lakhs ; *T.M.*, p. 25b and *Kalyan* p. 164a give 22 lakhs, while *Balwant*, p. 109 gives twenty lakhs and fifty thousands. I accept the sum given against *Balwani's* name in the *patta* granted to Chait Singh, Balwant's successor, by Shuja on 22nd November, 1770 A.D. For the *peshkash* see C. P. C., II. 741, 1294.



found amongst Musalmans, Shujah Dowlah possesses them according to our judgment in a higher degree than we have elsewhere observed in this country."<sup>15</sup> A most valuable contribution of the conference therefore was the establishment of mutual confidence of sincerity and loyalty between Shuja and the head of the British in Bengal, which led to important results in future.

#### 4. Shuja clears off the war indemnity ; he is reappointed Wazir, 1766.

Anxious to be punctual in the payment of the monthly instalments of the indemnity which weighed upon his mind as a heavy burden to be cast off as soon as possible, Shuja-ud-daulah remitted a month after the treaty of Allahabad five lakhs of rupees to Shah Alam's treasury to be credited to the account of the royal tribute from the company. We do not know whether subsequent instalments followed in due time. But it is quite certain that the whole of the balance was completely discharged on 11th June, 1766, two months before due date. In the treaty itself there was no mention of the species of rupees which he had to pay and Shuja-ud-daulah was at liberty to make his payments in *saunat*<sup>16</sup> coin the value of which was lower than that of *sikkah* coin. Notwithstanding this, out of fifty lakhs, he paid only twenty-seven lakhs in *saunat* coin and twenty-three in *sikkah* coin, giving the company a net advantage of 1,15,000 *saunat* rupees. Such an act of princely generosity peculiar to an oriental aristocrat coupled with his willing and prompt observance of the treaty impressed the business-like Clive who wrote to the select committee "that it shows in the

<sup>15</sup> C.P.C., II. 1044 ; Clive and Carnac's letter of 14th July, 1766 referred to above.

<sup>16</sup> *Sikkah* rupees were those that were minted during a given year and considered as standard coin for that year, while *saunat* or *sanwat* were minted 2 or 3 years before and therefore accepted at some discount or *batta*.

strongest light his (Shuja's) gratitude and equity of intention, leaves us no room for dispute with a power whose alliance may be so well depended upon, and which will always do honour as well as real service to the Company." The committee echoed the sentiments and displayed their eagerness to strengthen the alliance with Shuja "by a strict conformity to the stipulations on our part".<sup>17</sup>

As a sequel to the cordiality thus reaffirmed Clive recommended Shuja for reappointment as wazir and Shah Alam agreed to invest him with the robes of the office, if Munir-ud-daulah were allowed to work as his deputy. The condition was accepted and after some further negotiations in which Munir himself played an important part, Shuja repaired to Allahabad and was appointed to the post sometime at the end of 1766, *vice* Prince Akbar Shah. Besides the special robes and the insignia of the office, the emperor bestowed upon him some cash and other rewards.<sup>18</sup> Howsoever exalted, the wazirship was now an empty designation and Shuja could derive little benefit from it.

### 5. Early career of Beni Bahadur and his fall.

Shuja-ud-daulah was now resolved to set his own house in order. The treacherous Mughal officers had already been punished with degradation in some cases and dismissal in others. But steps could not be taken against one or two other notable men, whom he had suspected of disloyalty, as the English policy was to safeguard the interests of all those who had in any way helped them against Shuja in the recent struggle. At Chhaprah the wazir, however, managed to take Clive's consent to punish his disloyal officers even though they might have been the company's proteges, and after his return he proceeded to deal with them in his own way.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> C.P.C., I. 274, 2741; Clive to Sel. Com., Chhaprah, 11th June, 1766, *vide*, Ben. Pub. Cons., 23rd June, 1766; Ben. Pub. O.C. 23rd June, 1766, Nos. I. and III.

<sup>18</sup> C.P.C., I. 2792-2794; Vol. II. 1044; G. Ali, II, 215; *Mirat*, 256a; T.M., 251b (wrongly states that he was reappointed at Chhaprah).

<sup>19</sup> *Khair-ud-din*, 173.

One such notable figure was his own prime minister Maharajah Beni Bahadur, a man of obscure origin who had, by dint of natural talent, industry, and tact risen from poverty to power and become the virtual head of administration. His father Khem-Karan, a Brahman resident of Baiswara in the modern Unao district in Oudh, practised as an ordinary physician in the time of Saadat Khan (1723—39), a profession in which he was not destined to prosper. Impoverished and overtaken by adversity, he migrated towards the evening of his life to Lucknow,<sup>20</sup> which seemed to offer better prospects for earning a living. Here after a short duration of unsuccessful practice as a doctor, he was visited by blindness and had to adopt begging as the only means of subsistence for himself and his family. His son Beni, then aged about ten, would conduct him to the house of Saadat Khan's diwan Atma Ram who used to give away much in charity to poor Brahmans and beggars of other denominations, and the boy seating his blind father in the midst of the crowd of beggars would go out for a chat with the menial servants of the diwan's son Ram Narayan. Possessed of handsome features, marked intelligence and probably a sweet tongue too, Beni was liked by the servants who managed to get him appointed as a member of their order. When Beni was 15 or 16 years he was recommended by a dancing girl of whom Ram Narayan was enamoured. "Beni is a Brahman," she said to the diwan's son, "and it is not proper for you to take from him the work of a menial servant." As a result Beni was raised to be a trooper in his master's body-guard, came in direct touch with him (C.1738) and soon became his favourite.<sup>21</sup> Atma Ram's death having occurred those very days, Ram Narayan succeeded him as diwan with the title of Rajah and this was followed by Saadat Khan's suicide (March 1739). In 1748 his successor Safdar Jang deputed the rajah to

<sup>20</sup> *Harcharan*, 470a.

<sup>21</sup> A contemporary historian writes that he was in love with the boy (*taashuqe ki ba wu dasht* etc.) *Harcharan*, 470a.

manage his frontier districts of Shahabad<sup>22</sup> (in Hardoi) and Shikohabad, (35 m. S. E. of Agra) nominating his son Maha Narayan to officiate as diwan. Accompanying the rajah to Shahabad, Beni was there elevated to be the manager of his household and by virtue of his new respectable position became known as Beni Prasad.

This proved to be a turning point in his career, and although poverty had denied him formal education in his boyhood and in fact he continued to remain illiterate (*s.wād k'hwāndan na dāsh*t) to the end of his life, Beni Prasad now made the best use of the opportunity and grew up into an experienced and clever man of business. He discharged his duties with greater honesty, thrift and efficiency than others and consequently found his way to the rajah's heart. His good management in the marriage of his master's youngest son Hirde Narayan, celebrated at Lahore, earned him reputation as a successful organiser, and his judiciously spending a portion of his slender savings in the wedding of an indigent friend's daughter, an act considered as one of pious charity, enhanced his character as an unselfish philanthropist<sup>23</sup>. His star was now on the ascendant. Soon after Shuja-ud-daulah's accession he was introduced to the court by his master's son Maha Narayan, now head of the revenue and finance departments, and as the father and the son were badly addicted to sensual pleasures, usually spending their nights in drink and debauchery and days in sleep, much of the administrative work of the diwans' office fell into his hands, and more important still, he became a medium for the transaction of business between the diwan and the nawab. Once Shuja stood in immediate need of three lakhs of rupees which, however, could not be furnished in time by the voluptuous diwan, while Beni, when called upon to do it, managed for it

<sup>22</sup> The word reads like Shadabad in the manuscript (*Harcharan*, p. 470a) which I have not been able to discover. It may most probably be Shahabad, there being practically little difference in writing the two words in *Shikast*.

<sup>23</sup> *Imad*, 80.

without delay, and was as a consequence appointed Faujdar (Magistrate) of Khairabad (modern Sitapur) district, of course, in compliance with his own request. Here too he acquitted himself with credit by freeing the district from the refractory Mughals who had held a part of it in assignment, increased the crown land and augmented the revenues.<sup>24</sup> From his subsequent career it seems very likely that he sowed dissension between the diwan and his aged father on the one hand and the young nawab on the other, and in fact he is held responsible for it in no uncertain terms by a contemporary historian of standard authority.<sup>25</sup> However this may be, from this very time Ram Narayan and Maha Narayan began to fall out of favour and were eventually ousted from office by their protege, Beni Prasad who was in due course nominated first as diwan (C. 1755) with the title of Bahadur and then as Naib (deputy-governor) of Oudh and Allahabad (1759) and entitled as Rajah Beni Bahadur, soon magnified by the superlative Maharajah Bahadur.<sup>26</sup>

From this place onward Beni's career and activities have been noticed in detail in the previous volume and they need not be repeated here. From the very beginning of Shuja's connection with the company the rajah was the leader of the pro-English party at Faizabad, while his jealous rival Salar Jang was in favour of a struggle with the English and poisoned

<sup>24</sup> *Imad*, 81.

<sup>25</sup> *Harcharan*, 470b.

نواب را از آن هر دو پسر و پدر مخالف گردایند

*Tabsir*, 675 (brief but accurate).

Beni Bahadur is mentioned as *diwan* in 1769 H. (7th October, 1755—25th September 1756). That year a son was born to him. See *Tarikh-i-Bedar* (My MS.) page 32.

<sup>26</sup> *Harcharan*, 469b-470b; *Imad*, 80-81; Harcharan seems to be a little hard on the young Beni. We get the first notice of Beni as Naib in April 1759 when he was employed against Muhammad Quli Khan and the next in July 1760 when Shuja at the time of leaving to join the Abdali left him in charge of Oudh. Other early references of him as Naib are in S.P.D., XXVII L. 263 dated 14-5-1761 and in a letter of Ellis dated 9th Jan. 1762 (see Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. 3rd February, 1762.) A Marathi letter dated 3-3-1754 mentions Beni Bahadur son of Daya Bahadur, who is most probably a different man, S.P.D., XXVII, 81.



Shuja's ears against the rajah whom he misrepresented as being anxious to grind his own axe in pressing upon the Oudh court the policy of peace and inactivity. Shuja became highly suspicious of his connection with the English and the main charges preferred against him by the rival party were that he intrigued with the enemy, remained inactive at Buxar, and allowed them a passage from his side into the entrenchment of the wazir.<sup>27</sup> He is also said to have been friendly with Smith of Allahabad and entered into some sort of understanding with him.<sup>28</sup> Beni Bahadur's pro-English attitude and his inactivity at Panch Pahari and Buxar are undoubted, but it is doubtful whether his inertness was due to his collusion with the enemy for which we possess conflicting and vague evidence or to his sense of humiliation<sup>29</sup> to which he was subjected by the wazir's eleventh hour refusal to follow his sane advice after it had once been accepted and by the bitter calumny of his rivals at the court for which there is no lack of evidence, or to his deficiency as a soldier in which capacity he had not distinguished himself in any battle even before the nawab's break with the company. It seems probable that the last two causes together were more responsible for his conduct in the late war than the first one. The rajah was surely loyal to Shuja-ud-daulah, but, like all shrewd and ambitious men, more loyal to his own interests than to those of his master, and it was to retain his post and power that he had abandoned his master's cause to join Carnac after Shuja's power had been shattered and he had become a fugitive, reverting to allegiance on learning that the English demanded his women as hostages for his fidelity and that the nawab wazir was going to renew his struggle with Maratha

<sup>27</sup> *Harcharan*, 470b. Others like *Imad* (9b), *Khair-ud-din*, *Maadan* etc. are not very definite and allude to his complicity with the English. *Gentil* (237) charges him with treachery.

<sup>28</sup> *Khair-ud-din*, 173.

<sup>29</sup> *Imad*, 95 ; *Kalyan*, 132a ; *Gentil*, p. 237 admits that Beni being jealous of Salar Jang's influence over Shuja hindered capture of Patna etc.

assistance. After the peace of Allahabad he loyally co-operated with his master, but he continued his personal friendly relations with the English, especially with Smith, which was obnoxious to Shuja-ud-daulah whose suspicion had deepened with the lapse of time. Since his restoration the nawab was anxious to chastise the rajah and after his interview with Clive at Chhaprah he only waited for an opportunity and a pretext to execute his resolution.

Beni Bahadur's dereliction of duty on more occasions than one furnished the wazir with his long sought opportunity. Through his laxity or negligence escaped from prison Balbhadra Singh of Tiloi, a patriotic but rebellious baron of Oudh, whom Shuja had placed under the rajah's custody. He failed to punish another powerful zamindar, Bijai Singh of Bahraich, who had treacherously slain Bande Ali Khan, son of Khadim Husain Khan, collector of his district, had created disturbance in the rajah's own district of Khairabad (Sitapur) and defeated and put to flight his agents, Din Dayal and Haji Beg. The situation became so alarming that Beni himself had to proceed against the rebel; but he displayed marked pusillanimity and entered the town of Khairabad only after Bijai Singh had retreated beyond the river Sarain. Again the rajah is said to have instigated another rebel chief, the Muslim Rajah of Muhamadi,<sup>30</sup> (62 miles N. W. of Sitapur and now in the modern Kheri Lakhimpur district), to withhold his submission,<sup>31</sup> although he had signified his intention to do so and Shuja had marched to Muhamadi to receive it. Having taken offence, the nawab decided to arrest the rajah by a stratagem, as he was too powerful to be easily overpowered by mere force, and the time being favourable as owing to the

<sup>30</sup> For a brief history of Muhamadi estate see *Oudh Gazetteer* (original edition), Vol. II. p. 518.

<sup>31</sup> *Harcharan*, 471a. For Bande Ali's murder see *T. M.* 252b. also. In a letter (received at Calcutta on 4th Feb. 1767) Shuja wrote that he was marching to Khairabad and Sandi to settle some affairs (C.P.C., II. 16 and 31). In another letter (received on 27th Feb., 1767) he says that he is near Sandi and will proceed to Khairabad by way of Muhamadi (II. 108).

Abdali invasion of the Punjab (Dec. 1766-July 1767) the attention of the English, Beni Bahadur's protectors, was diverted by the danger from the north-west, he quickly turned back towards Khairabad at the head of a thousand fleet horse, and leaving the main part of his force behind entered the premier's camp outside the town with barely 200 of his men about mid-day on 5th February, 1767. The rajah ran out to welcome him, conducted him into an inner apartment of his tents and placed before him a variety of fruits, sweets, and other preparations. After rest and *Zuhar* prayer (2 p.m.) Shuja expressed his desire to go out to hunt a tiger which had made its appearance in the vicinity and seating the rajah on his own elephant on the pretence that he wanted to consult him on an important matter, set out in the direction of Muhamadi. On reaching the main division of his army the nawab called for another elephant and asked the rajah to take his seat on it, and although Beni Bahadur could now smell his master's evil designs, he had no option but to obey. On a hint from the wazir the driver pulled down the ropes and in an instant huge curtains covered the *amari* and made the rajah a prisoner. A demand of thirty lakhs of rupees (according to *Ashob* 35 lakhs) was now made from him on the ground of misappropriation of the State revenue, but the charge was hollow and intended to silence public criticism of the arbitrariness of the wazir's action. While continuing his march towards Muhamadi, Shuja-ud-daulah immediately sent the main detachment of his army to Khairabad to obtain possession of Beni's treasure and effects and to announce that his troops and servants should consider themselves transferred to the nawab's service. Some of the rajah's followers who had reasons to be dissatisfied, rejoiced over his fall and joined the nawab wazir, while others specially the Mughals whose livelihood and influence had depended upon the ex-premier's patronage were filled with gloom and in perturbation of mind fled towards the jungle, leaving much of their baggage and some of them even their horses to be taken possession of by Shuja's men. Beni Bahadur's own property, including a vast treasure, furniture, tents, artillery, 1,300 horses (according to

another account 1,700) and 185 elephants was declared escheated to the state.<sup>32</sup>

Beni Bahadur was confined in the house of eunuch Nawish Khan at Faizabad and a pension of twenty rupees a day was allotted to him from the State. But Zuqi Ram Agarwala, superintendent of the wazir's treasury and notorious for his niggardliness and his equally stingy colleague Kallu, once a menial servant of Shuja's household, meanly withheld a part of this daily allowance, and even suggested that five rupees were more than enough. The wazir, however, indignantly rejected the proposal and confirmed his original orders.<sup>33</sup> Considering it dangerous to keep such an influential officer clapped up into jail and apprehensive lest colonel Smith should move the Calcutta council to effect his release for which there were strong rumours, real or merely concocted, Shuja decided to make the rajah impotent for evil. Accordingly on 2nd March, 1767 iron nails were pierced into both his eyes, which rendered him blind. In this condition Beni Bahadur continued to live for many years and died in the time of nawab Saadat Ali Khan (1798-1814). From almost the unanimous testimony of contemporary historians it is clear that the rajah was a great philanthropist and a real friend of the poor and besides giving away something in charity everyday and helping charitable institutions, he opened free kitchens (*Langar-Khana*) at Lucknow, Benares and other places during the days of drought or famine, where cooked food and ration were distributed to the suffering humanity. His fall was therefore greatly regretted by the common people.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Harcharan*, 470b-471b; *Khair-ud-din*, 172-3; *Imad*, 99-100. *Imad* says the incident took place near Madaon (Mohibullahpur) near Lucknow. I prefer *Harcharan* who was present at Lucknow those days. Regarding details (except here and there, for example he says it was hot season which it was not), *Imad* is supported by *Khair-ud-din* and is correct.

<sup>33</sup> *Harcharan*, 472a and b. Charles Elliot records the tradition that Saadat Ali Khan invited Beni on the pretext of appointing him his naib and had him blinded again and the ex-rajah died of pain. (See *Chronicles of Oonas*, p. 106.)

<sup>34</sup> *Harcharan*, 473b; *Tabsir*, 674-5; *Khair-ud-din*, 173-4; *Imad*, 101;



## 6. Muhammad Elich Khan appointed Naib.

Beni Bahadur was succeeded by Muhammad Elich Khan in the office of prime minister. Descended from an Afghan of obscure origin, the new premier was a Sunni Muhammadan of the town of Bari near Dholpur where his indigent father earned his living as a barber. With no advantages of birth or wealth and being utterly illiterate (*ummi mahaz*)<sup>35</sup> like his predecessor, he had to start his career from the lowest rung and in his early manhood served for some time as one of the *farrashes* in the wardrobe of Rai Lalchand Khatri, faujdar of Etawa. Subsequently he transferred his services to Masud Khan, an eunuch in the imperial court at Delhi, and finally got admittance into the circle of the wazir's personal servants at Faizabad, where he rapidly rose to importance, becoming Shuja-ud-daulah's trusted favourite after Beni Bahadur's fall into disfavour. The Khan was raised to the dignity of naib (deputy), the highest post in the wazir's gift, after the rajah was thrown into confinement (Feb. 1767), and as he was apprehensive lest Shuja-ud-daulah should any time change his mind and restore the prisoner to liberty and office, he proposed that the rajah should be put to death on the pretext that a certain important Englishman, who was Beni Bahadur's well-wisher, had endeavoured to move the Calcutta authorities to effect the ex-premier's release. But Shuja-ud-daulah, anxious to respect the pledge he had once given to the rajah that he would never behead him, refused to agree. Elich Khan then suggested that Beni Bahadur should be deprived of his eye-sight and rendered impotent for evil, as it was dangerous to keep him in that condition in confinement and as the wazir's promise was definitely restricted to his immunity from death. The cunning device pleased the nawab who gave his consent and Elich Khan performed the atrocious deed with his own hands.<sup>36</sup> No longer afraid of a rival hungrily

*T. M.*, 252b. Regarding the blinding of Beni Harcharan maliciously remarks that he thereby got the inheritance from his own father (who too was blind).

<sup>35</sup> *Sawanihat*, Vol. I. p. 101.

<sup>36</sup> *Imad*, 101 ; *Sawanihat*, I. 80.



awaiting from behind the prison bars an opportunity for interference, Muhammad Elich Khan entered upon the duties of his new and exalted office with a composed mind in March 1767.

### 7. Defeat and Death of Bijai Singh of Bahraich.

The district of Khairabad of which Beni Bahadur had been magistrate and collector (faujdar) in addition to his duties as prime minister, was now placed in charge of the nawab wazir's sons Mirza Jangali and Mirza Saadat Ali Khan, then aged about 15 and 12 years respectively, with Din Dayal and Kesari Gopal as their advisers. With these two seasoned officers by their side, the Mirzas attempted to restore order and peace by reducing rebellious landlords to submission and proceeded to punish Bijai Singh, who, after having been ousted from his zamindari of Bahraich, had been carrying on depredations in this (modern Sitapur) district. For a long time this redoubtable scourge successfully eluding the faujdar's troops continued the practice of carrying fire and sword into the heart of the district and the young Mirzas themselves had to march against the rebel, deputing Korji Beg eight miles ahead of them with instructions to face the enemy wherever he could be found. By a lucky chance one of Bijai Singh's spies having fallen into the hands of Korji Beg's men was compelled to reveal under a savage torture his master's whereabouts and to conduct the enemy force to the river bank (probably Sarain) where Bijai Singh was encamped. The main division of his troops had crossed over to the other side of the river, while he along with his sons and some attendants, forty men all told, was still preparing to cross, when Korji Beg's army suddenly appeared in sight. Bijai Singh's followers advised him to plunge his horse into the river instantly and be out of danger. But the valiant Rajput scornfully rejecting the proposal as unworthy of acceptance by a man of his race, dismounted along with his men to weather the advancing storm on foot. A very severe engagement took place in which Bijai Singh and all his forty followers lay

dead, fighting bravely to their last breath, but not before they had slain a considerably large number of well-mounted and trained enemy Afghans and *tilangas* (trained sepoys). The chief cause of disturbance in the district was thus removed and peace returned to Khairabad.<sup>37</sup>

#### 8. Shuja-ud-daulah strengthens and remodels his army.

After his restoration a number of useful projects simultaneously engaged Shuja-ud-daulah's close attention, and the most important of them was a well-thought-out and steadily pursued scheme of urgent military reform. In his recent warfare against the English he had perceived the hopelessness of ill-disciplined and ill-managed Indian army, however brave and devoted, when pitted against the troops of the same origin, class and place, but trained and commanded by European officers after their Western manner, and the main lesson of Buxar was too painful to be lost upon the wazir's quick and impressionable brain. After the treaty of Allahabad Shuja-ud-daulah in his personal life and outlook became almost a changed man. Brought up though he had been in the luxuries of an opulous and hereditary court and devoted though he had been to the pleasures of the *harem*, sports and chase till near the end of his thirty-third year, he seems to have now realised the consequences of a life of indolence and ease, and was determined to reform and strengthen his army and purify his administration, and although he did not entirely give up his sensual hobbies, he began henceforth spending most of his time in personally looking after the details of administration and supervising the equipment and discipline of his troops. He dismissed the faithless Mughal mercenaries and filled their places by raising a fresh body of troops, mostly Rajputs and Hindus of other castes and Indian born Muhammadans. Although the wazir did not ignore cavalry, he realised the value of trained infantry, had preference for it and bestowed anxious care on its training and equipment. Within a year

<sup>37</sup> *Harcharan*, 471b-472a.

and a half he had 30,000 new and chosen horse and foot "the men being all young and the horses of the best quality."<sup>38</sup> As he continued to make further levies, the number and strength of his army soon swelled to a higher magnitude. Following the example of Mir Qasim and keen to get his troops trained in the European style, he employed at great cost French and Abyssinian officers who commanded some of his battalions, which were dressed in prescribed uniform and armed with firelocks, matchlocks and bayonets. He grudged no expenditure in possessing an up-to-date park of field artillery of European design, established a foundry for casting cannon and manufactured, besides swords, shot, rockets and pikes, matchlocks and firelocks after the English model. The nawab spent "his mornings in seeing his battalions exercise and in overseeing his founders and gunsmiths with whom he usually spends two or three hours daily." He reorganised his intelligence department and established contact with important Indian courts, including the Fort William, Calcutta and Poona whence he regularly obtained the earlist news of important happenings in those distant places. These military reforms, though they excited unbecoming jealousy and suspicion of his allies, the English, consolidated his position and power in his provinces and rehabilitated his reputation among the contemporary Indian princes.<sup>39</sup> In fact the wazir's neighbours now once again looked upon him as a formidable power and a European traveller who spent some time at Allahabad opined that "having none but the Hindoos or the Muhammadans of India to contend with," this prince "might transmit his name to posterity as a celebrated warrior and conquer the chief parts of the empire."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> C. P. C., II. 346, 407, 618.

<sup>39</sup> *Imad*, 101-102 ; *T.M.*, 252a ; *Maadan*, IV. 259a-260a; R. Smith's letter to Sel. Com., dated 24th November, 1767, 3rd, 7th and 10th January, 6th February, 1768 ; Barker to Sel. Com., 17th February, 1768.

<sup>40</sup> Mrs. *Kindersley*, letter No. 49, p. 204.

### 9. Shuja-ud-daulah's unsuccessful diplomacy : his early designs on Ruhel-Khand frustrated.

A close study of Shuja-ud-daulah's correspondence with the English authorities at Fort William reveals his intense desire to possess himself of Ruhel-Khand immediately after his restoration and a scheme in his mind whereby to achieve this object. He rightly realised that the enterprise was beyond his strength and the British troops with their Western military science and discipline being almost invincible against untrained and badly led Indian armies of the 18th century, his policy was to hire a part of the company's brigades to assist him in conquering it. But as the English were not likely to help him in a war of aggression and he was entitled to requisition help from them only for the defence of his dominions according to the second article of the treaty of Allahabad, he took pains to represent the Ruhelas as hostile and dangerous. In pursuit of this policy he applied for military assistance, early in October 1765, against the Marathas and his neighbours, obviously the Ruhelas, on the plea that these neighbouring chiefs "considered him as a dangerous person", because of his alliance with the English company and were "forming diverse projects." Although Clive directed Smith, posted at Allahabad, to succour the wazir in case of an invasion of Oudh, he expressed his unwillingness to "employ the Company's forces for *any idle schemes*," and therefore despite Shuja-ud-daulah's persuasion that the scheme would be profitable to the English, he failed to goad Clive into action against the Ruhelas, ostensibly because the latter (Ruhelas) were not out for aggression.<sup>41</sup> Hereafter the correspondence for about one whole year (January—9th December, 1766) is unfortunately missing and hence there are no records of later developments. We know, however, from another source that in October 1766 Shuja-ud-daulah reopened the question and again proposed that Robert Barker be directed to accompany him with English troops towards Kora where he had the intention of marching "for the ratification of certain agreement

<sup>41</sup> C. P. C. I. 2727, 2728 and 2757.

with the Rohilla chiefs," and he repeatedly wrote to Barker, urging him to hasten to his assistance, as "Mir Qasim with a large army has made advances towards his *Subah* and is coming to Allahabad".<sup>42</sup> But it was a mere rumour and probably an inspired one, and therefore Clive refused to lend British troops, suggested "an amicable settlement of the dispute" with the Ruhelas and advised the wazir not to march to Kora, "as perfect peace prevails in that quarter.....Moreover this movement on the part of His Highness will be looked upon with suspicion by the Ruhelas and will cause them much alarm and apprehension."<sup>43</sup> But Shuja-ud-daulah was not the man to be so easily deterred from his long cherished ambition, and before he could receive final refusal from Calcutta, he once again prepared to attack his Ruhela neighbours, cleverly construing, it seems, some word in a letter from Clive into permission to capture Mir Qasim, in whose arrest and punishment the English were supremely interested, by force, but the British governor protested that it was not his intention to get the ex-nawab of Bengal by violence out of the hands of the Ruhela chiefs,<sup>44</sup> which once more frustrated the wazir's designs for some time.

The Abdali invasion of 1766-67 afforded him a splendid opportunity for making a fresh endeavour towards the realisation of his dream. But as usual he concealed his real designs and as the Shah's movement south of Lahore caused a flutter in Calcutta, Shuja-ud-daulah advised the immediate occupation of Ruhelkhand on the plea of preventing the Ruhelas from going to join the invader. Arguing plausibly that the Shah's power without Ruhela assistance was negligible, while it would become formidable if the latter were permitted to form a junction with him, the wazir wrote to Verelst that "should the Rohillas bring the Shah upon us it would be difficult to satisfy him; *but he (the Shah) is a mean-spirited man and a little*

<sup>42</sup> Barker to Sel. Com., 26th Oct., 1766, *vide* Ben. Sel-Com. Progs. 1766, p. 225.

<sup>43</sup> C. P. C., I. 2772.

<sup>44</sup> C. P. C., I. 2783.



*sum will make him easy, provided it is decided to punish the Rohillas first.*"<sup>45</sup> It is evident that Shuja-ud-daulah's policy was an immediate occupation of the Ruhela country and that of bribing the invader to return to the Punjab, if he were to march down to the rescue of his Indo-Pathan kinsmen. But whether the English could see through the game or not, they would not be so easily entrapped, and the governor refused to take the step recommended and replied that he in conjunction with the wazir would demand "a categorical answer from the Rohillas" for their conduct after the rainy season.<sup>46</sup> It is interesting to note that so far as Shuja-ud-daulah was concerned the cat was soon out of the bag. Within a week of making his proposal for a joint invasion of Ruhel-Khand, he informed Verelst that there was no likelihood of a danger from the Abdali and even advised recall<sup>47</sup> of British troops from Sheorajpur, where they had been stationed as a precautionary measure, after he had become sure of the English attitude towards his Ruhela project and when he had found that the English commander was insisting on his (Shuja's) accompanying the British troops to the line of defence against the Shah,—a measure that he thought unnecessary and premature and was altogether unwilling to adopt. Had the danger from the Shah been real, the English would probably have agreed to a temporary subjugation of Ruhelkhand; but as it was not and the measures of defence undertaken by the Bengal government were merely precautionary,<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> C. P. C., II. 234.

<sup>46</sup> C. P. C., II. 255.

<sup>47</sup> C. P. C., II. 265 and 266.

<sup>48</sup> C. P. C., II. 269 and 322.

Dr. Nand Lal Chatterji (*vide his Verelst's Rule in India*, Chap. I) has completely misunderstood Shuja's object and policy and his attitude towards this invasion. He mistakenly thinks that the wazir was nervous, extremely eager for a compromise with the invader and even anxious to join him in a crusade against the English. According to him the danger to Bengal was real. All these have been discussed and corrected by me in a paper entitled "*Was the Abdali Invasion of 1766-67 a Real Menace to Bengal?*" (see J. I. History, Madras, April, 1940.)

Shuja-ud-daulah was obliged to postpone his ambitious scheme to a more favourable time.

#### 10. Shuja-ud-Daulah's new building and gardens.

Sometime in 1766 after he had reorganised his resources and replaced a part of his antiquated army by well recruited and trained troops, Shuja-ud-daulah desired to furnish for himself and his family all those objects that would add to their comfort and pleasure and enhance his prestige and majesty in the appraisal of the princely order as well as that of the public. Accordingly he not only made extensive additions to the humble mansion of his grandfather but also erected a new and better furnished palace and two mud forts and laid out many a fruit and flower garden. The buildings in the palaces and the audience halls were ornamented with a variety of coloured designs. Besides a beautiful garden (called Anguri bagh) within the precincts of the palace three more symmetrically designed gardens were laid out outside the enclosure of the palaces, but within the ramparts of Faizabad, and for these about one thousand gardeners were employed. He established a zoo and an aviary with a variety of animals and birds at great cost to his treasury. A little later an enclosure, strengthened by a moat, was provided round the town, and its neighbourhood with a circuit of twenty miles was converted into green parks and gardens.<sup>49</sup>

Shuja-ud-daulah's reputation was now firmly re-established, and many of his officers and chiefs who had deserted him in 1764-65 returned to his service. Umrao Giri and Himmat Bahadur (Anup Giri), once noted for their loyalty and friendliness to the wazir came back from Bharatpur and re-entered the Oudh service, each with one thousand troops. Rajah Lachhmi Narayan, formerly Saadat Khan's wakil at Delhi, came back to Faizabad from the Jat rajah's court and was warmly received by the nawab who embraced him and presented to him a necklace of

<sup>49</sup> *Harcharan*, 499 a & b : *Imad*, 106.

jewels and an elephant, besides robes of honour for him and his seven followers. Some other old servants of his family were similarly forgiven and re-employed.<sup>50</sup>

A few other important events that took place at this time may conveniently be mentioned here. On 2nd January, 1768, a white elephant, overcome by a fit of madness, broke the chains and running *amok* fled through the streets towards the jungle to the great consternation of the people. Shuja-ud-daulah personally charged the beast, and taking his seat coolly on its back brought it back tamed to the stables.

On 1st May while the nawab-wazir was returning from a hunting excursion, an unknown man fired his musket at him from a short distance. But he missed the aim and Shuja luckily escaped unhurt. The criminal was arrested on the spot; but he refused to reveal his identity and the names of his accomplices. Shuja-ud-daulah thought it impolitic to push forth with the enquiry and ordered the man's release.<sup>51</sup>

By the middle of 1768 some of the wazir's new buildings were complete and the gardens and the zoo were ready. On 25th July, he paid a public visit to the gardens along with his mother, wife and other ladies and their relations and servants. The party went round sight-seeing and making purchases in the *Mina-bazar* held in the gardens where females alone kept stalls of a variety of fancy articles and sweetmeats. The Nawab Begam (wazir's mother) was so pleased with the show that she distributed about five thousand rupees among the servants of the wazir's household.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Harcharan, 497b.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Harcharan, 499b-500a.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TREATY OF 1768

#### 1. Smith's charges of anti-English conspiracy against Shuja.

Reference has been made in the previous chapter to Shuja-ud-daulah's successful attempt at reorganising his army, training and disciplining his troops after the Western model and equipping them with up-to-date weapons, especially guns and firelocks of European design, calibre and efficiency. The number and strength of his force, which was now for the most part composed of trained infantry, supplemented by mobile cavalry and a powerful park of artillery, excited the jealousy and suspicion of his allies and neighbours, the English in Bengal, who imagined that the wazir's military preparations in times of peace and tranquillity could have no other object except a war of revenge on his part, and who endeavoured to bring about a reduction in the strength of his army by diplomacy and persuasion and failing that by the threat of arms.

Towards the end of 1767, while a war for supremacy was being fought between Haider Ali, assisted by the Nizam of Haiderabad, and the English government of Madras, there were rumours in Allahabad and whispers in Delhi of an impending conflict between Shuja and the English and these rumours were regularly reported by Richard Smith, who commanded the company's brigade at Allahabad, to the authorities in Calcutta. The earliest report on the subject is dated 16th October, 1767 wherein Smith wrote that "he (Shuja) manifests an inflexible steadiness in modelling his army. He has made some considerable levies; his army is improving more than I wish—he has constant intelligence from all quarters and his advices from Calcutta are very

minute ; from thence he is early acquainted with material circumstances, not only those which are past, but often-times of what is expected.”<sup>1</sup> The next day (17th Oct.) he informed the Bengal select committee that the rumours were not confined to Delhi, and enclosing the copies of two letters from Madho Rao and Bapuji Pandit to Shuja-ud-daulah and their replies from the latter, opined that these letters confirmed the wazir's intention and policy against the English.<sup>2</sup> After one day's gap the colonel again wrote to the committee that Shuja-ud-daulah was preparing a grand enterprise against the English, was in regular correspondence with the Marathas and might have entered into an alliance with them and other powers. He added that the wazir was raising horse and foot, paid his troops regularly month by month and might have formed a secret conspiracy to overthrow the British power, and he would remain friendly only so long as it was not safe to declare himself. It was therefore advisable, urged Smith, not to withdraw the third brigade from Allahabad. He concluded by enclosing copies of a number of letters of which the one relevant to the subject of the colonel's letter was from Malhar Rao Holker's widow to her wakil stating that Shuja had written clandestinely to Janoji to assemble his forces and advance and settle his affairs on their former footing.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The committee rejects Smith's reports.

The above letters with their enclosures were carefully considered by the committee at a meeting held on 3rd November and it was resolved that there was no cause of danger from Shuja-ud-daulah whose profession, correspondence and conduct did not warrant the presumption that he was preparing for a contest with the company. “Whatever schemes of ambition the Nabob Shuja-ud-Dowlah may have

<sup>1</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 16th Oct., 1767.

<sup>2</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 17th Oct., 1767.

<sup>3</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 19th Oct., 1767.



formed in imagination," wrote the committee to Smith in reply, it was not in his interests to think of fighting at present with the company's government in Bengal. Both policy and necessity must bind him to the English interest, and being fully aware of the Maratha character he would not trust them and make an alliance with them. "All the other powers," continued the committee, "whom he could wish to engage in a general confederacy are either too remote by situation, too distrustful of each other, too jealous of him or too feeble in themselves to create any reasonable apprehension that he will lay much stress on their friendly assistance. These joined to our moderation towards him, his open confidential correspondence with the President and his general conduct form the strongest presumptive evidence of his professions and reality of his attachment." As regards the wazir's military preparations, the committee informed Smith that Shuja-ud-daulah had been raising levies with the governor's permission and "the *dauks* were likewise placed with the President's consent to obtain news of the Maratha movements as quickly as possible." "So far from rendering himself formidable" concluded the committee, "Shuja Dowlah has not yet raised the number of troops which we could wish to see maintained for the protection of his country, and without which he will ever require the assistance of our forces contrary to the spirit and intention of the orders repeatedly transmitted by our honourable masters." But as regards future the Bengal authorities desired that "not-with-standing these our present sentiments of Shujah Dowlah's present disposition," his conduct should be carefully observed, but without giving him any cause of "suspicion and distrust."<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Smith's further reports rejected.

Before Smith could know the government's opinion, he sent (23rd Oct.) another alarming communication to Calcutta. "It is with concern," he wrote, "I learn the state of Shujah Dowlah's army. The number of his cavalry at present does

<sup>4</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Smith, 3rd Nov., 1767.

not exceed fourteen thousand, but what is of more consequence, he seems to know the value of infantry; he has five battalions of sepoys complete,.....; two other battalions are now raising. He can already bring more pieces of artillery into the field than we have with the second and third brigades." In view of this information Smith made three proposals: firstly that the strength of the British troops in the Chunar fort should be increased so as to make it superior to Shuja-ud-daulah's garrison in that fort; secondly that steps should be taken for the removal of M. Gentil, who had one of his comrades at the head of the nawab's artillery, from the latter's service; and thirdly that the wazir should be compelled to reduce the number of his troops. "I would submit it to the consideration of the Committee, if there does not appear an absolute necessity for setting some bounds to the number of Shujah Dowlah's forces, at least to his infantry." <sup>5</sup>

The Calcutta government again refused to be alarmed. But it decided to have a garrison of its own in Chunargarh so long as a part of the English army had to remain in the territories of Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-daulah, and to secure the removal of Gentil and his associates from the counsel and country of the wazir. It was further resolved to authorise the governor to write to Shuja to persuade him to stop further recruitment of troops. <sup>6</sup> Evidently Verelst did not look upon the situation as grave and although he had given a hint to him on the subject on 27th October, he postponed writing to the wazir till the 24th December. <sup>7</sup>

Smith would not, however, relax his vigilance and activity. On 5th November he again informed the Fort William authorities that although there was no danger to his territory, yet Shuja was increasing his troops from several quarters, and concluded by adding that "I am convinced he bears no good

<sup>5</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 23rd Oct., 1767.

<sup>6</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 17th Nov., 1767.

<sup>7</sup> C. P. C., II. 638 and 724.

will to our nation.”<sup>8</sup> But again the committee refused to treat the situation as critical and postponed consideration of it till the next meeting. Meanwhile, Smith who was now fully acquainted with the committee’s views, again pressed the government through a long letter (24th Nov.) to take action, as Shuja was, in his opinion, making preparations for a war with them.<sup>9</sup> The committee, on the contrary resolved “that Colonel Smith’s letter being attentively perused and considered, this Committee are of opinion that whatever Shujah Dowlah’s intentions may have been there appears from the Colonel’s own representation nothing at present to be apprehended from the Nabob.” Smith was nevertheless now advised to keep “the most watchful eye” on the wazir’s measures and report his movements.<sup>10</sup> On 22nd December the government authorised Smith to have a garrison of British troops in Chunargarh and to get Bolt’s *gumashtas* removed from Shuja-ud-daulah’s dominions as Bolt was alleged to have been carrying on correspondence with Gentil. Two days later Verelst wrote to the wazir, persuading him to refrain from further augmenting the number of his troops, as peace was about to be concluded with the Nizam and Haider Ali and the governor was anxious to “avoid increasing the wazir’s burden except in cases of real expediency.”<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. Shuja protests against the rumours.

The rumour of an impending conflict between him and the English could not long remain concealed from Shuja-ud-daulah and caused him embarrassment and mental agony. In order to contradict the reports and lodge against them an emphatic protest, he summoned Captain Harper, commanding officer of the English troops at Faizabad and Resident at the wazir’s court and told him (third week of November) “in a

<sup>8</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 5th Nov., 1767.

<sup>9</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 24th Nov., 1767.

<sup>10</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 11th Dec., 1767.

<sup>11</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Smith, 22nd Dec., 1767 ; C. P. C., II. 724.

melancholy mood" that his enemies had circulated false rumours that he was preparing to fight with the English and was calling Hafiz Rehmat, Dunde Khan, Najib-ud-daulah and other chiefs to his assistance. He urged Harper to inform Smith that he wanted an enquiry to be held and that if it was discovered that the rumours were baseless, then the offenders should be punished. Shuja-ud-daulah wrote direct to Smith protesting against the malicious reports spread by designing persons and requesting that measures should be taken to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the rumours and to punish the guilty. Smith hypocritically replied that he did not credit the reports and desired an interview with the nawab, no doubt in order to see for himself whether Shuja-ud-daulah was really the master of a formidable army and harboured hostile designs. Shuja-ud-daulah desired nothing better and an interview was therefore quickly arranged. The wazir at the same time, professing loyalty and friendship, wrote to Verelst too in these words: "What malicious people have reported and continue to propagate with obstinate malevolence has neither a foundation nor colour, nor can it be termed anything but a lie and an invention."<sup>12</sup>

##### 5. Smith contradicts himself.

On his arrival at Faizabad, Smith was cordially received with due military honours by the wazir who made him a rich present, consisting of some good horses, other articles and two lakhs of rupees in cash, of which the colonel accepted everything except the cash. Shuja-ud-daulah assured him of his friendship and fidelity and strongly remonstrated against the false rumours given currency to by his enemies. Having observed the wazir's military establishment and activities with his own eyes and satisfied with the rectitude of his professions and intentions, Smith returned to Allahabad and referring to

<sup>12</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 3rd Jan., 1768; Shuja's letter to Smith received at Allahabad on 3rd Dec. and Smith's reply, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1768, pp. 40-58; C. P. C., II. 768.

his letter of the 3rd January in which he had given a detailed account of his visit and observations, he wrote to the Calcutta authorities on 7th January, 1768 that "*you will perceive that there is no probability of any disturbance from that quarter*" <sup>13</sup> (from Shuja).

While it was pleased that "all suspicion was removed" as a result of personal interview, the committee was struck by Smith's inconsistency and at its next meeting (27th) wrote to him, "we cannot but be somewhat surprised at the sudden change in your sentiments regarding the wazir, when we consider how very lately you have represented him as on the eve of a war." The committee seems to have become suspicious of Smith's conduct and hence it directed him to find out "the original source from whence this suspicion of Shujah Dowlah has arisen. We desire you will cause a very particular enquiry to be made into the information you have received relative to his conduct and communicate the same to us with all convenient expedition and we shall at all times be happy to testify the great regard we have for his alliance, and we must further desire in case it should appear you have been deceived by the reports which were conveyed to you to his prejudice that you will in your next conference personally assure him.....that.....we have never entertained the least suspicion of his fidelity." <sup>14</sup>

#### 6. Smith's unsuccessful defence of his conduct.

We have no evidence to ascertain whether Smith held any enquiry into the matter. It is, however, certain that he never supplied the information on the point to the Calcutta authorities. He kept quiet for about a month, and then after handing over the charge of the British troops at Allahabad to Sir Robert Barker, he reopened the controversy and from the neighbourhood of Patna despatched a detailed account of the wazir's military establishment, the number

<sup>13</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 7th Jan., 1768.

<sup>14</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Smith, 27th Jan., 1768.



of his troops, their discipline and equipment, and more particularly his artillery with his various founderies, informing the committee that he possessed seven battalions, not five as was wrongly given by him in a previous letter. He concluded his long description by adding that "I have had occasion to observe that the idea of dependence on us hurts him beyond measure. A large share of vanity discovers itself in all his actions... when I consider Shujah Dowlah, himself Vizier, son of a Vizier, and grandson of a man who held one of the first offices of Government when the Mogul Empire was in its flourishing state, that Shujah Dowlah bred up in all the luxury of the East, and ever much addicted to pleasures, should now so totally change his manners as to adopt this system of conduct which in time must infallibly render him truly formidable.....I own I cannot but admire the man for the great progress he has already made in his new system ; though at the same time I am fully convinced it is highly expedient for us to resolve on some efficacious means to check his rising power." The colonel closed his letter with the following postscript : " Since I left Allahabad I have received intelligence that the Nawab Shujah Dowlah has on foot three new battalions of sepoy and is increasing the number of his artillery-men which he is forming into a regular battalion." <sup>15</sup> Finally in reply to the committee's charge of inconsistency Smith wrote on 17th February that he had not been inconsistent in his opinion on Shujah's character and that he attached no value to his professions—" *those Eastern protestations.*" <sup>16</sup>

### 7. Barker supports Smith.

Smith's place at the Allahabad court was worthily filled by Barker who in testifying to "the indefatigable attention" the wazir was bestowing upon his military establishment, reported (17th Feb.) that "the progress he has made in his

<sup>15</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Mir Afzal's Garden, 6th Feb., 1768.

<sup>16</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 17th Feb., 1768.

army is beyond conception." "His army consists of seventeen (according to another copy sixteen) battalions of sepoy's," he continued, "five of which have Europe-made arms, the whole with bayonets and about 30,000 horse." Barker enclosed translations of two letters from Shuja-ud-daulah the contents of which, he believed, would make it clear that he wanted to try the courage and strength of his army. He was bent upon getting Munir-ud-daulah removed from Shah Alam's court, was utterly against Najaf Khan, Balbhadra Singh and Balwant Singh, for he feared that they would be on the English side in the event of a war with him. He had already disposed of Beni Bahadur and would do the same with Shitab Rai, if he could.<sup>17</sup> Of the two letters from Shuja referred to, one reported that Clive had not appointed Munir naib-wazir and he would never consent to his acting as such, and the other, describing a raid by Najaf Khan's people on the wazir's village of Daundiakhara, complained that despited repeate representations to the emperor, he (Shuja) had not been given a satisfactory answer. "My friendship (to the English) is steadfast," he wrote, "and known to the whole world. Therefore I shall not represent to the king ; but if Najaf Khan's people come again to disturb the subjects, my forces shall be sent to take them where-soever they are to be found—I am not under any dread or apprehension from them, but observing a due respect have been hitherto patient. Now I will not."<sup>18</sup> One may agree with Barker's subsequent sober comment that these letters were written "in a very uncommon style,"<sup>19</sup> but most certainly they did not warrant the presumption that their author was spoiling for a fight *with the English*.

On 3rd May Barker furnished some more details about Shuja's military activities and reported that he had sent three lakhs of rupees to Gujrat for buying good horses, had invited Omar Khan, an ex-officer of the Abdali's, to take

<sup>17</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., 17th Feb., 1768.

<sup>18</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1768, pp. 208-12.

<sup>19</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., 19th Feb., 1768.

service under him and despatched rupees forty thousand to Sidi Baloch for enlisting 5,000 Baloch horse, besides having sent for a Sikh Sardar to bring with him 2,000 troopers.<sup>20</sup>

### 8. The committee defers decision.

In spite of so many reports from Smith and Barker, Verelst and the select committee had hitherto postponed the final consideration of them, as they definitely believed Shuja-ud-daulah to be loyal to his friendly engagements with the company and his military preparations to be anything but formidable. But certain circumstances obliged the governor to come to an early decision regarding the action to be taken in the matter. In the first place, colonel Smith who had arrived in Calcutta and taken his seat on the select committee, was naturally anxious not only for an early consideration of his reports but also for the committee's acceptance of his proposal to reduce the number of the wazir's troops and to prescribe a permanent check on his rising military power. In the second place, Shuja-ud-daulah had been urging the governor since April 1767 to use his influence with the emperor and get him restored as the *de facto* wazir with full powers which were then wielded by his rival Munir-ud-daulah, and this question was so inextricably mixed up with the issue raised by Smith's reports that the one could not be tackled without attempting the solution of the other. And finally Verelst's confidence in the wazir's loyalty was partly shaken, when it was discovered in July, 1768, that Shuja-ud-daulah was attempting to smuggle arms from the French and the Dutch settlements in Bengal into Oudh under cover of a *dastak* from the governor, obviously not meant for transportation of arms and other materials of war. Although all these arms were, according to Verelst himself, "old and bad," yet the committee was rightly prejudiced<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., 3rd May, 1768.

<sup>21</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 23rd July, 1776; Letters from Rumbold, June 19, 29, 30, 1768; C. P. C., II. 1037 and 1039.

against the wazir and it was not thought desirable to postpone much longer the consideration of Shuja-ud-daulah's policy and intentions *vis-a-vis* the company.

### 9. Shuja explains his conduct and policy.

It seems that the wazir was not altogether in the dark about the views and sentiments of the committee, and apart from his several protests against the unbecoming misrepresentations of his intentions and policy, he now sent a comprehensive explanation of his conduct. He informed Verelst that he had received intelligence from various sources that his levying a big force was being misunderstood in Calcutta and required an explanation. In view of both the parties being bound by oath to the treaty of 1765 and anxious to be loyal to its provisions, there should be no room for differences or misunderstandings, yet considering the governor his friend, he was submitting the following points for his consideration and left him to judge whether his statement was true or untrue. "In the first place," he wrote, "there is no clause in the treaty forbidding him to levy or maintain (any number of) troops..... In the second place, His Excellency must know that his *house* has been stripped of fifty years' prosperity by the wars," and it must take many years indeed to recover its losses, meaning thereby that his force had not yet reached the limit of 1763 and of that previous to those years. Thirdly, unlike the practice in other States, he alone in Oudh could levy or dismiss troops and as "at the end of every month a thousand troops are reduced by death, desertion or rejection to sixty or seventy, he sees nothing unusual in making up the deficiency. But in the eyes of people who look no further than appearances, he seems to apply himself constantly in the raising of troops." Fourthly, his army was intended to be employed, not against his friends the English, but against his enemy, and not only the governor and Smith but also the whole world knew as to who he was (probably the Ruhelas or the Marathas), and his allies the English need have no fear from him. Fifthly,

he was bound by the terms of the treaty to assist the English with his forces in case of an invasion of the company's territory. "In this case it is necessary to reflect, supposing that he is without forces, and the English *Sardars* are attacked, from whence is he to bring assistance. If he fails in this, it will appear that he has violated his engagements." Sixthly, "in case it is absolutely the pleasure of English *Sardars* that he should retain no forces, he is ready to acquiesce in their demand, and if the English *Sardars* agree to send their forces with him against his enemies, he has no need to keep troops of his own." He ended his letter with the following candid and sincere but helpless appeal: "If after hearing this explanation, the governor is not satisfied and suspicion still lurks in the hearts of the English *Sardars*, it is indeed very surprising. The friendship which he vowed to the English *Sardars* was for his whole life and not for a few days. He intended that it should be perpetual and binding on his latest posterity, and that whilst the English *Sardars* preserved a footing in Hindustan, the grandeur of his house should remain." He assured Verelst that "by the blessing of God, there will be no breach of faith on his part." "As he owes his country to the favour of the English *Sardars*, so if the English *Sardars* and the gentlemen of the Council think fit to strip him of it and resolve that it shall not be his, one line from the governor and another from the Council will be sufficient. Let him but receive such a message; the moment he receives it, he will deliver up the country to English *Sardars*." <sup>22</sup>

This letter reached Calcutta on the 1st August, two days before the committee passed its momentous resolution whereby it was decided to take steps against the wazir, but it was not given the consideration that it deserved. The assurance from their ally on the face of it was sincere and should have been accepted by the Fort William authorities, especially as the wazir was not guilty of mobilising his troops or concentrating them on his own frontiers or those of the



emperor or the company. As it was not done the committee abandoned the usual practice followed in such cases for solving inter-state problems. As a matter of fact with the exception of Verelst's advice that he should rest from his labours and not waste his time and money in increasing his army Shuja was not given any clear and formal warning before it was decided to take practical steps to reduce his military strength.

#### 10. The committee's resolution against Shuja.

At last on 27th July Verelst reviewed Shuja's military preparations and his sentiments towards the English, and gave reasons why the committee had so far not taken steps to call an explanation from him or prescribe a check on his ambitious programme. On 3rd August Smith delivered an elaborate minute making out a plausible case against the wazir whom he represented as being on the eve of a war with the company. According to him one of the main objects of Shuja's ambitious policy, steadily pursued since 1765, was to recover Kora and Allahabad from Shah Alam ; but having failed to recover them, he requested Smith to procure them from the king on the same rent that Najaf Khan paid to the royal treasury, promising him (Smith) a present of four lakhs of rupees for that service. Even this did not succeed, and Shuja had to discard these ineffective means in favour of a fresh one, namely, his persistent effort to be allowed to act as wazir with full powers which would automatically concentrate the administration of Kora and Allahabad in his hands. Next Smith drew the committee's attention to Shuja's formidable military preparations, his efficient intelligence system and his correspondence with the Marathas, the Nizam and Haider Ali and other Indian rulers, and finally to the wazir's refusal to comply with the committee's request to dismiss Gentil from his service. He concluded his long minute with the statement that Balwant Singh of Benaras had told him that Shuja would have launched an attack on the English, if the Deccan war had

ended in the company's defeat, and that he was informed by Harper that the wazir was greatly disappointed when the news of the English success on the coast was brought to him. He referred to the wazir's attempt to smuggle arms from Bengal and complained that the committee had failed to take action against him. In conclusion Smith suggested that an explanation should be demanded from Shuja-ud-daulah for his recent conduct and his military strength should be permanently reduced.<sup>23</sup>

Verelst, on the other hand, thought that, in view of the fact that the wazir was not bound by any article of the treaty of 1765 to limit his forces to a fixed number the best plan was not to call an explanation but to invite him to Shah Alam's presence on the pretext of settling the affairs of the wizarat and ask the emperor to order him to limit his army to eight or ten thousand foot, 5,000 horse and 20 pieces of artillery and never to exceed that number, and making this the indispensable condition of giving him the sole charge of the management of the king's household, with the power to appoint his deputies. But Verelst was afraid that the king would not agree to allow Shuja to become his *de facto* wazir.<sup>24</sup>

The two minutes were subjected to a critical examination and after a prolonged discussion the committee resolved "that the conduct of the Nabob Shuja Dowlah in levying such a formidable number of troops,.....at a time when there cannot be urged the least motive of self-defence, since his own dominions as well as those of his allies enjoy perfect tranquillity, is not only contrary to the spirit of the treaty we have entered into with him, but confirms in the strongest manner our suspicion that he is meditating some hostile measures against the dominion of His Majesty or the peace and tranquillity of the Company's possessions."

What necessary measures should be taken to combat the so-called danger were to be decided by the committee at its

<sup>23</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 3rd Aug., 1768, pp. 576-616.

<sup>24</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 3rd Aug., 1768, pp. 616-621.

next meeting. It was, however, agreed that "such measures should be taken with all possible secrecy," as the committee was anxious to avoid "an open rupture with His Excellency, if it can be safely and honourably avoided."<sup>25</sup>

### 11. The source of the rumours traced : a conspiracy against Shuja.

It will be clear from the foregoing narrative that the origin of the English suspicion of Shuja-ud-daulah's intentions and as a matter of fact the original cause thereof was the rumour that he was preparing for opening hostilities against them, and that his military preparations, regular news service and correspondence with the Marathas and other powers, though important enough in themselves, were in the beginning at least mentioned by Smith as arguments in support of his conviction that these rumours must be true. It is worthy of note that the rumours set afloat from Allahabad became not merely the starting point of the English suspicion, but they also eventually poisoned the relations between them and the wazir and were prominently mentioned in the treaty subsequently concluded by the parties. Who was the author of these rumours and how did they reach the ears of Smith are important questions that call for a close investigation. It has already been mentioned that Shuja-ud-daulah consistently believed all through this ugly episode that the rumours were mischievously propagated by his enemies,<sup>26</sup> demanded an enquiry into the whole affair, and the punishment of the persons responsible, if the reports spread by them were found baseless<sup>27</sup>. It will be recalled that Verelst too had directed Smith to find out the original source of the rumours and to communicate to him the names of the persons concerned. Not only did Smith not hold any enquiry into the information on the strength of which he had sent highly suspicious reports to Calcutta, but he did not even

<sup>25</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 3rd Aug., 1768, pp. 621-82.

<sup>26</sup> C. P. C., II, 768, 1068.

<sup>27</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 27th January, 1768.

inform the governor of the names of those who were responsible for bringing the rumours to his notice. Smith's significant silence on the latter point together with the clear statement of contemporary Persian authorities that the rumours were maliciously spread by the wazir's enemies in order to do him injury, and all other recorded evidence direct as well as circumstantial, reveal the existence of a conspiracy against Shuja-ud-daulah in which the leading roles were played by Munir-ud-daulah and to a lesser extent by Shah Alam and Smith only became a willing tool in their hands. The Imperial Records Department of the Government of India possesses the copies of a number of letters from Munir and one or two from Shah Alam to Verelst reporting the rumours referred to and insinuating that Shuja was preparing to launch a campaign of revenge against the English. Although these letters followed Smith's in point of time, the internal evidence furnished by them, such as their style and the identical measures suggested by their authors, arouses suspicion that Munir was the inspirer of Smith's reports. It is significant that there were no reports on the subject from Shitab Rai, Muhammad Raza Khan and hosts of other officers of the company in Bihar and Allahabad (though their letters are full of diverse other information for the governor's ears) except from the three above mentioned individuals, and four months later from Barker when the latter came into close touch with the common source, namely, Shah Alam's court. It should be noted that since April 1767 Shuja-ud-daulah had been persuading Verelst to compel Shah Alam to allow him to exercise the *de facto* powers of wazirship,<sup>28</sup> which was highly obnoxious to the emperor and utterly against the interests of Munir, as the latter was in possession of the very powers that the wazir claimed for himself. Hence Munir ardently desired not only to frustrate Shuja's ambition but also to dry the very channel through which the wazir wanted to sail to his immediate objective so as to prevent him

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter XIII of this book.

from attempting to replace him (Munir) in future. The emperor was already in his hands, and now he diligently strove to drive a permanent wedge between the wazir and his friends the English in Bengal through whom Shuja had regained wizarat and through whom he was now trying to regain the full powers of that office.

A consummate intriguer, Munir's plans were well-laid and his tactics, aiming at keeping himself behind the scene were employed in poisoning Smith's ears against the wazir through the emperor and thus first preparing the background of the case and then himself sending seemingly independent reports direct to the governor on the subject of Shuja's ambitions, military preparations and the obviousness of an immediate danger from him, as if he had no knowledge of the contents of Smith's letters. Finally Shah Alam's testimony was intended to give the finishing touch to the conspiracy and to shake the foundation of cordiality between the wazir and the Bengal government.

Munir-ud-daulah's first report against the wazir, despatched from Patna about two months after Smith's earliest communication on the subject obviously to disarm suspicion of his implication in the conspiracy, urged the advisability of the effective possession of Chunargarh by the British troops and the removal of Gentil from Shuja's service. "As he has given himself and his fortune to the service of the English *Sardars*," wrote Munir to Verelst, "he thought it his duty to inform the Governor that the war in the Deccan has given rise to a multitude of rumours, surpassing in their thousand absurdity the imagination even of visioners, not the least of which is an attempt to form a federal union of different potentates." His insinuation was against the wazir and he suggested that in order to checkmate the confederacy that Shuja was forming, Verelst should enter into a friendly alliance with Hafiz Rahmat Khan and other Ruhela chiefs and requested the governor to authorise him (Munir) to negotiate a treaty with them. In his next letter Munir characterised the danger from Shuja as immediate and strongly recommended



to Verelst the necessity of authorising Barker at Allahabad to raise three additional battalions "with expedition and to train them without delay," while he himself decided to "raise a body of four or five thousand horse and foot that they may be of service in time of emergency." He confessed that he had already "made these observations to colonel Smith and colonel Barker who must have informed the governor thereof," and concluded by administering Verelst the advice that "the best medicine is that which prevents a disease."<sup>29</sup>

Without waiting for the governor's orders Munir entered into negotiations with the Ruhelas and the Sikhs and began raising a body of fresh troops, justifying his hasty action on the plea of danger from Shuja being imminent, and repeating his former proposals for augmenting the number of the company's troops at Allahabad. His letter ended with the significant remark that the news of Faizabad must have been supplied to the governor by Barker and Harper and it was therefore unnecessary for him to give the details thereof. In another letter he emphasised that his proposal for an immediate reinforcement of the brigade at Allahabad was "really essential and highly reasonable."<sup>30</sup>

Shah Alam too shared the responsibility of contributing his might to prejudice Verelst against his wazir. Setting forth his views regarding the governor's proposal of investing Shuja with full powers of premiership, he wrote in unambiguous terms that he would not consent to his acting as wazir, and endeavoured to assure Verelst that Shuja would have made a common cause with the enemies of the English, if the latter had suffered the smallest reverse or adversity in the Deccan War. "How the Vizier," wrote the emperor, "without any apparent cause busied himself in levying forces, disciplining sepoys, casting cannons and shot and making all war-like preparations, and how he still continues these

<sup>29</sup> C. P. C., II. 738, 747, 748, 749 and 787.

<sup>30</sup> C. P. C., II. 817 and 841.

preparations, must have been fully made known to the governor.....It is quite superfluous for His Majesty to emphasise the point."<sup>31</sup>

Gentil, the French privateer in the wazir's service, thought that Smith alone was responsible for the reports<sup>32</sup> against Shuja, but from the above analysis, it will be clear that the responsibility should be shared equally between Smith, Munir and Shah Alam.

## 12. Was Shuja really hostile to the English ?

There is no doubt that Smith's reports regarding the number, equipment and discipline of the wazir's troops, the personal care that he bestowed on them and efficiency of his intelligence service are substantially correct. The wazir's anxiety to consolidate his power and to extend his territory by recovering Kora and Allahabad and by bringing Bundelkhand under his control is apparent on the face of the narrative (*vide* Chapter XI). But it is highly improbable that his military preparations were designed to fight a war of revenge with the English, that his ambition was to expand in the direction of Bihar and Bengal and that his correspondence with the Marathas was nothing but an incitement to that power to fight with the company and a process of negotiation for forming a confederacy of various chiefs against the government of Bengal. It will be recalled that Shuja-ud-daulah had established news connections with Poona, Hyderabad, and Mysore and entered into correspondence with the Marathas with the express desire of Verelst who wanted the wazir to procure authentic information of the movements of those powers during the Deccan war.<sup>33</sup> Notwithstanding Smith's positive assertion that his letters to the Marathas left no doubt in his mind that the wazir was forming a confederacy against the company, there is nothing incrimi-

<sup>31</sup> C. P. C., II. 834.

<sup>32</sup> Gentil, p. 271.

<sup>33</sup> Ben. Sel. Com., to Smith, 3rd November, 1767 ; C. P. C., II. 540, 548, 550, 618.

nating in these letters. Peshwa Madho Rao's letter to him and his reply thereto are formal, while the Peshwa's vakil's offer of help in view of rumours of a rupture between Shuja and the English and his demand of *Sanad* for Bengal in return for the aid promised were promptly rejected by the wazir who forwarded the whole correspondence<sup>34</sup> to Smith. There is, however, one letter a superficial acquaintance with which might lead one to doubt the sincerity of Shuja's friendship with the English, especially if it is divorced from powerful contrary evidence and read with Smith's comment that "If the contents of this letter are facts, there no longer remains doubt of Shuja Dowlah's intentions." It is from Malhar Rao Holkar's widow to her vakil informing him that Shuja had "written clandestinely to Janoji urging him to assemble forces, advance and settle things on their former footing."<sup>35</sup> Even if this letter be authentic, it seems to have been written under suspicious circumstances, as the lady was anxious to make a pilgrimage to Gaya, Kashi and Prayag and had requested Smith for a permit,<sup>36</sup> and being a partisan of the Peshwa's house, she was naturally against Janoji. How did the letter come into the hands of Smith is also not free from suspicion. Moreover, Smith's reports represent Shuja-ud-daulah as busy forming an anti-English confederacy with Madho Rao and Janoji, besides other chiefs, a scheme which the wazir, a shrewd politician that he was, must have known as being impossible of realisation, as these two Maratha chiefs were rivals and political enemies and could not be brought together for any common patriotic objective. Madho Rao was not inclined to take sides in the Deccan war; nor was he desirous of joining any confederacy, such were his circumstances at this juncture, although he

<sup>34</sup> Smith's remark that there might have been some incriminating letters which Shuja might have withheld need not be taken seriously. Despite his exertions, he could not intercept any, nor could he get any information on the subject.

<sup>35</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., 19th October, 1767.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

kept the English all through in suspense and did not allow them to guess his real intentions and policy which were first to settle his domestic quarrel<sup>37</sup> by subduing Raghunath Rao and Janoji and then only to turn to his external enemies. An alliance between Shuja and Janoji was even more unlikely, as the latter, unlike Madho Rao, had no interest in North Indian politics, except in those of Bengal and his territories being separated from Oudh by hundreds of miles of almost impassable barriers, he could only have made a diversion on Bengal, if Shuja had attacked it from the west ; but both these were outside the region of practical politics under the circumstances. The Bengal select committee therefore rightly refused to treat Smith's reports seriously. In fact these coloured reports must have produced comic effect on the mind of Verelst and his colleagues who had been advised by Shuja-ud-daulah just a fortnight before to take practical steps to organise a coalition of the Ruhela, the Bangash and the Jat chiefs, who were natural enemies of the Marathas, to check the latter's advance towards Northern India, should they decide to make a common cause with the Nizam and Haider Ali.<sup>38</sup> The wazir had further informed the governor that "there is no trust to be put in the Marathas" on learning that Madho Rao had made an offer of friendship, and advised him that to prove the sincerity of his professions, he (Madho Rao) should be asked to devastate Haider Ali's dominion.<sup>39</sup>

Far from betraying even lurking hostility, Shuja-ud-daulah's conduct during the Deccan war fully confirmed his friendship for the English. Not only did he establish news connection with the Deccan States and raise a large body of troops, especially cavalry at his own expense at Verelst's requests (though they were useful for him too in his pursuit

<sup>37</sup> My independent study on the subject is supported by the conclusions arrived at by Dr. N. K. Sinha, *vide* his paper "*Madho Rao I and the First Anglo-Mysore War*" (Progs. Indian History Congress, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 1334-39).

<sup>38</sup> C. P. C., II. 597.

<sup>39</sup> C. P. C., II. 650.

of an aggressive policy against his Indian neighbours), but he also offered to make a diversion<sup>40</sup> on the enemy from the north. He rejected Haider Ali's appeal for joining a *holy war* against the English by informing him that religion had nothing to do with politics and that the English were his friends.<sup>41</sup> He was the man to suggest to Verelst the desirability of procuring a royal *sanad* from Shah Alam for the Nizam's dominions so as to invite the latter's followers to desert their master so publicly dismissed by his Mughal suzerain<sup>42</sup> and thus compel him to abandon his alliance with Haider Ali. He proposed a confederacy of some of the important powers such as Jawahar Singh Jat, Ahmad Khan Bangash and the Ruhela chiefs against the two Muhammadan powers of the south,<sup>43</sup> and these were not ordinary sacrifices for a Muslim ruler for the sake of retaining friendship of a non-Muslim power. Had he harboured the least ill-will against the English, he would not have pressed Verelst as he did several times (February 1767, October and November 1767 and March 1768 when the Deccan war was in progress and Smith was secretly accusing him of hostility) not to withdraw the British contingents from Allahabad contrary to the committee's decision and not to hand over the Allahabad fort to any one but to keep it in English hands.<sup>44</sup> Unless Shuja-ud-daulah was devoid of all political sagacity, he would not be preparing for a contest with the company and yet at the same time be appealing to Verelst to retain one-third of the total English forces on his frontier and practically under the direction of his sworn rival Munir-ud-daulah and also to keep the strategic fort of Allahabad in the hands

<sup>40</sup> C. P. C., II. 684.

<sup>41</sup> *Imad*, 106-7. Smith's remark that Balwant Singh told him that Shuja would have attacked the English, if the latter had failed in the Deccan need not be taken seriously, as being an avowed partisan of the English. Balwant was against the wazir and wanted to shake off his allegiance to him.

<sup>42</sup> C. P. C., II. 635, 650.

<sup>43</sup> C. P. C., II. 597.

<sup>44</sup> C. P. C., II. 97, 635, 663, 840.



of Smith, and much less would he be requesting the governor "that the English army may not be removed from his (Shuja's) dominions, as its remaining there will be attended with great advantage."<sup>45</sup>

Both the wazir's correspondence and conduct give the lie to Smith's unwarranted assertions. There is not a single sentence in his huge correspondence with Verelst, other English officers and his own agents at Calcutta and other Indian notables that might be construed to mean that he was against the English and was preparing to overthrow the British power in Bengal. On the contrary, his letters to Verelst are full of such expressions as, "his life and fortune are devoted to the English," "from his heart and soul he is ready to perform anything," "will labour with all diligence to perform whatever the governor signifies," "looks upon pleasing the governor in every transaction as of the utmost importance," "is at all times the governor's ally whether in prosperity or adversity," "while the writer lives he will act to the pleasure of the English *Sardars* and interfere with nothing without their knowledge," etc. etc.<sup>46</sup> His conduct was compatible with his professions, so far as his relations with the company were concerned, and governor Verelst characterised his confidential correspondence as "open" and he never really became convinced that Shuja meant to break with the English. At the end of March 1768 the government of Bengal had rightly informed the court of directors that the rumours against the wazir were unfounded and that "his whole revenue can never support a force which can be really formidable to us."<sup>47</sup> And even after the committee

<sup>45</sup> C. P. C., II. 87, 840.

<sup>46</sup> C. P. C., II, 278, 311, 597, 618, 886, etc.

<sup>47</sup> Letter to the Court of Directors, 28th March 1768. Clive too believed that Shuja could never be a menace to the company. He saw no sense in a hostile attitude towards Shuja-ud-daulah believing, as he did, that the British-led sepoys made the company invincible against any native power (See Clive's letter to company, May 23rd 1769, *vide Clive of Plassey* by Davies, page 396).

had decided to reduce the strength of the wazir's army Verelst and his colleagues confessed that "no satisfactory evidence appears of the Nabob (Shuja) ever proposing a war with us."<sup>48</sup>

Smith was surely right in characterising Shuja-ud-daulah as ambitious and proud and in believing that the idea of dependence on the English hurt him. But what the colonel missed was that the wazir was too seasoned and sagacious a politician to misunderstand the facts of his situation and to allow his personal feelings to warp his political judgment and mar his material interests and favourite schemes. It is an incontrovertible fact that since August 1765 the main object of Shuja's foreign policy was not only to regain his former power and territory but also to aggrandise himself against his neighbours, the Ruhelas, the Bangash and the Bundelas *with English assistance*, direct and indirect, political and military. At the very time that Smith was sending his confidential despatches to Calcutta accusing Shuja of forming a confederacy against the English, the wazir was appealing to the head of those very people in Bengal to get him restored to the full power of wazirship,<sup>49</sup> and assist him to recover Bundelkhand<sup>50</sup> which once belonged to the *Subah* of Allahabad,—schemes which could not fructify without English aid and which were of more vital importance for Shuja and Oudh than the satisfaction of the wazir's personal feelings of revenge, if he had really had any in the present case. At the same time he had his eye on Kora and Allahabad, which had formed part of his dominions before the treaty of 1765, and these too he was trying to regain with the English governor's help.<sup>51</sup> The history of the last ten years (1765-75) of this nawab-wazir's reign clearly demonstrates the fact that he was partly

<sup>48</sup> Letter to the Court of Directors, 25th September 1768.

<sup>49</sup> C. P. C., II, 311, 768, 799, 840, 848, 866, etc.

<sup>50</sup> C. P. C., II, 487, 506, 524, 587, 589, 1294.

<sup>51</sup> C. P. C., II, 87, etc.

dependent<sup>52</sup> on British bayonets not only in the successful prosecution of his policy of aggression but also in the maintenance of internal order and external peace from a threatened Maratha invasion. Shuja-ud-daulah would hardly commit political suicide by venturing to prepare for a rupture with a power in the hope of whose support he had conceived many a concrete scheme of self-aggrandisement.

### 13. Why did Verelst agree to penalise Shuja ?

It has been shown that Verelst and the select committee were consistently of opinion till the 3rd of August 1768 that Shuja-ud-daulah's military establishment was far from being formidable, and that there was no satisfactory evidence in support of Smith's repeated allegations that he was preparing for a war of revenge. Why did Verelst then agree to penalise the company's ally? A modern scholar suggests that "the implicit confidence of the Governor and Select Committee in the Vizier was at last shaken in some measure when it came to their knowledge in July that the latter was secretly procuring arms from Chandarnagar and Chinsura." On account of this "No difference of opinion remained as to the urgent need for some effective action to check the warlike preparations of the Vizier."<sup>53</sup> It should, however, be noted that this cause was a minor one, and although the governor warned Shuja against its repetition, he considered the arms smuggled as "old and bad" and hence useless. Moreover, even if smuggling of arms had continued, which did not, it would never have made Shuja formidable for the English, such were the considered views of Clive<sup>54</sup> and of Verelst and his colleagues who believed that the wazir's entire resources could *never bring forth a force that might be formid-*

<sup>52</sup> Referring to the Verelst's policy of suspicion W. Hastings wrote in 1772, "I know too that Shujah-ud-daulah is so little able to contend with the Company that he is unable to stand without them." (Quoted by C. Davies, *W. Hastings and Oudh*, p. 141.)

<sup>53</sup> Dr. N. L. Chatterji's *Verelst's Rule in India*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>54</sup> *Clive of Plassey* by A. M. Davies, p. 396.

able for the government of Bengal.<sup>55</sup> Nothing had happened between 28th March when these words were written by the committee and 31st July to increase the wazir's income by a single rupee. Nor did the discovery establish Shuja's hostility towards the English. At least Verelst and the committee did not believe that it did, and they had to admit, after it was decided to prescribe a limit to the wazir's force, that "*no satisfactory evidence appears of the Nabob ever proposing a war with us.*" Obviously the real cause of the change must be sought somewhere else.

It will be recalled that Smith was a member of the Bengal select committee, and on his return to Calcutta sometime in April 1768 he took his seat on the council. Naturally he now exerted himself to do what his despatches from Allahabad had failed to achieve. He was vain and ambitious and possessed an exaggerated notion of his position and importance. Clive had many a time taken offence at his overbearing demeanour and inordinate ambition;<sup>56</sup> he (Smith) had insulted Shah Alam II by ordering the royal music to stop playing<sup>57</sup> and by describing its notes as barbarous; and he had a standing quarrel with Verelst whose authority he chose to ignore and even defy on more occasions than one.<sup>58</sup> This good-natured but weak governor exhibited irresolution and weakness in Shuja's case as well as his own. There is some truth in Gentil's statement,<sup>59</sup> however prejudiced he might have been against Smith, that the allegations preferred by the colonel against the wazir were false and that

<sup>55</sup> Ben. Sel. Com.'s letter to C. D. 28th March, 1768.

<sup>56</sup> Clive giving several instances when Smith had offended him by the assumption of a superior tone wrote: "... ..Indeed.....I could observe a mind too actuated by ambition: Such a tendency in Colonel Smith, to govern and command those who ought to govern and command him....." (*Vide Clive of Plassey* by A. M. Davies, 429-30).

<sup>57</sup> *Siyar*, 774; *Gentil*, 259.

<sup>58</sup> *Verelst's Rule in India*, pp. 172-188.

Clive on hearing of Smith's conduct towards Verelst expressed the opinion that the colonel deserved to be punished with dismissal from the company's service. See *Malcolm's Life of Clive*, Vol. III. pp. 213-214.

<sup>59</sup> *Gentil*, p. 171.

he wanted to force a war on the ruler of Oudh in order to make a fortune for himself. Verelst's minutes and despatches on the subject show that he never really believed that the wazir was hostile to the English and yet his character obliged him to yield to the pressure.<sup>60</sup>

#### 14. The committee's plan of action against Shuja.

The rest of the story may now be briefly recounted. On the very day (3rd August) the committee resolved to check Shuja-ud-daulah's growing military strength by diplomacy and failing that by force, steps were taken to strengthen the third brigade at Allahabad and to keep it in readiness for an emergency. Barker was instructed to keep a very "vigilant eye" on the wazir's conduct and to provide a supply of corn and other necessities for four months in the fort. A sum of ten lakhs of rupees was sanctioned to be despatched immediately to Allahabad for the expenses of the troops. On the 10th each member of the committee expressed his opinion in a separate minute on Shuja's character and the strength of his army which were naturally in keeping with the resolution of the 3rd August, and then Smith was requested to furnish at the next meeting a scheme of military operations to be utilised in case rupture with the wazir became unavoidable. It was further resolved to send an embassy to Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-daulah, and Barker was again directed "to keep a very vigilant eye" over the wazir's movements and if he found "very convincing proofs that he is resolved upon a rupture," he was then to reinforce the garrison of Chunar fort, but without giving "the least unbrage or cause of suspicion" to Shuja. The governments of Madras and Bombay were

<sup>60</sup> In fairness to Verelst it must be admitted that he wished before Smith's return to Calcutta that Shuja should give a practical proof of his loyalty by reducing a part of his army. This wish was inspired by three factors, pressure of Smith's reports suggesting that Shuja should be made to reduce his army, a fear that some English traders, chiefly Bolts, were intriguing with the wazir, and the governor's own anxiety to solve the problem without difficulty. (See Ben. Sel. Com. to C.D. 5th Jan. 1768).



requested to make every effort to get hold of any letters that might be passing between Shuja on the one hand and the Nizam, the Marathas and Haider Ali on the other. It was also decided to send the second brigade to the Karamnasa, not only to exert military pressure on the wazir but also to employ it against him in case of necessity.<sup>61</sup>

On the 14th the committee resumed consideration of a plan to execute their resolution of 3rd August and during the course of the discussion Smith strongly criticised Verelst's proposal of trying to reduce Shuja's military strength under an order to be secured from the emperor as defective and even dangerous, for the wazir's refusal to comply with the imperial orders must lead to a war. The colonel proposed that a letter be written to Shuja, describing how the English had restored his *subahs*, hastened to his help at all times, showed great attention to his honour and glory, and got him appointed as wazir. The letter was to enquire as to why he had been making formidable military preparations at a time when there was perfect peace and tranquillity in his dominions and those of the English and when the latter were always ready to come to his assistance whenever there was the shadow of a danger, and to add that although there was no explicit mention in the treaty of 1765 that he was not to increase his force beyond a certain fixed number, as he maintained, it was implicit therein that he would not make it formidable. He was to be informed that the governor was sending an embassy and he should meet them and remove all the causes of the English suspicion regarding his policy and intentions, of course, by reducing the number of his troops. Smith suggested that if this letter failed to bring Shuja round, vigorous measures must at once be taken to enforce their demands.<sup>62</sup>

At the next meeting (17th) Smith's proposal was accepted and it was decided that the wazir be informed that a deputation

<sup>61</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Aug. 3 and 10, 1768 ; Letter to C. D. Sept. 3, 1768.

<sup>62</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 14th August, 1768.

consisting of Messrs Cartier, Smith and Russel was leaving Calcutta to see him at Allahabad to remove the causes of suspicion and to adjust everything to the satisfaction of both the parties. Conformably to the resolution of the 17th, the committee drafted two letters to Shuja, one on the lines suggested by Smith and the other purporting to seek the enforcement of the emperor's orders, and they were handed over to the deputation with the instruction that the second letter was to be delivered to the wazir only after the first had proved definitely ineffectual in securing the committee's object peacefully. The second letter furnished yet another instance of how the English authorities in Bengal would use the Mughal emperor's name in furtherance of their own ends, sometimes without even informing him in time that his name was being so used. Proceeding with the basic assumption that the wazir's military policy was inspired by hostility towards the English, the committee laid down in this letter that "we cannot but consider such a conduct on your part as manifesting an intention to disturb the repose which His Majesty's territories, your dominions and the Company's valuable possessions have for some time enjoyed.....". It ended with the ultimatum : "His Majesty has been graciously pleased to direct you to reduce the number of your forces, wisely judging that so large an army can tend only to disturb the general tranquillity. We concur entirely with His Majesty in his opinion and we now acquaint your Excellency that it is our determined resolution to enforce his royal commands ; since we hold it absolutely and indispensably necessary so to do in order to prevent any one neighbouring power from acquiring such a degree of strength as may enable him to disturb the tranquillity of the Empire."<sup>68</sup>

The deputation were instructed "to use their utmost endeavours to accomplish the reduction of the Nabob's military strength, by friendly arguments and mild exhortations," and if their friendly efforts proved ineffectual, then to request Shah Alam to direct the wazir to disband a part of his army.

<sup>68</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 13th Sept., 1768.

Shuja was to be allowed to retain eight to ten thousand disciplined infantry and ten to twelve thousand horse, in addition to a few thousand peons for the work of revenue collection. As he was likely to feel the public reduction of his army humiliating, it was suggested that to avoid it an arrangement might be made to transfer the disbanded troops as recruits to the English brigades. The deputation were not to make any agreement for the withdrawal of British garrison from Chunargarh and the third brigade from Allahabad.<sup>64</sup>

### **15. Shuja's helpless position ; he decides to meet the Deputation at Benares.**

The Bengal government's policy of suspicion and distrust subjected Shuja-ud-daulah to considerable worry and vexation. He wrote several letters of protest to Verelst, explained his policy and conduct and made numerous personal appeals to the governor not to believe the mischievous tales of his alleged hostile attitude diligently circulated by interested men. His letters to Verelst demonstrated his helplessness,<sup>65</sup> but served no useful purpose : the Bengal government did not even send a clear reply to the points raised by the wazir. Even after the select committee had formulated its policy and despatched a deputation, Shuja was not given information regarding the real object of their mission. Although he knew the reality from another source, the information formally supplied to him by Verelst was that he was unable to meet the wazir owing to ill-health, but Cartier, Russel and Smith were about to proceed to Allahabad "to silence the rumours of the evil-minded people." About a month and a half later he was told that those gentlemen were proceeding to the emperor "for the settlement of affairs," and finally to "demonstrate the stability of our treaty and friendship

<sup>64</sup>Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 17th August, 1768 ; letter to C.D. 21st Nov., 1768.

<sup>65</sup>C. P. C., II. letters from Oct., to Nov., 1768. (Too many to be given by name).

and to stop the mouths of the evil-minded men."<sup>66</sup> What surprises one most is the fact that neither Verelst nor the Calcutta council attempted a categorical or even otherwise satisfactory reply to the points raised by the wazir in his formal explanation of August, 1768, and the governor merely sent a vague and platitudinous answer, namely, "that a plainness and openness of heart and an uprightness of conduct is, by the blessing of God, the characteristic of the English *Sardars*; that the unbecoming rumours propagated by the evil-minded and malevolent have occasioned the governor a great deal of uneasiness; that the English *Sardars* are ever ready in their alliances and engagements; and that by the blessing of God our friendship will daily increase and the faces of our enemies be ashamed."<sup>67</sup> Under these circumstances the helpless wazir once again reaffirmed the sincerity of his friendship and expressed his dependence on the governor. He wrote that he "is from the bottom of his soul His Excellency's sincere friend and ally, and will never depart a hair's breadth from the will of His Excellency and the English *Sardars*." Having neither the requisite strength nor the will, at least at this time, to resist by force the improper English demands, he decided to meet the deputation before the latter could reach the imperial court at Allahabad.

### 16. Negotiations for a fresh treaty.

Anxious to avoid giving the deputation a meeting in the presence of Shah Alam, Shuja-ud-daulah, accompanied by a slender escort marched quickly to Benares and pitched his camp on the bank of the Barna on 18th November, and the deputation having arrived there on the previous day, he interviewed them without loss of time. For a day or two there was a formal exchange of visits, and then they came to business which lasted for more than a week. Shuja professed friendship and during the course of the discussion on his military preparations initiated by the deputation, he enlarged

<sup>66</sup> C. P. C., II. 1122, 1172 and 1175.

<sup>67</sup> C. P. C., II. 1203.

on the strength and state of the Oudh army in the time of his father and grandfather which was far numerous than the one he had been able to gather, and declared that he was not bound by any article of the existing treaty, which he had not infringed in any shape, to either maintain any fixed number of troops or to reduce the strength of his forces. He pressed this point on Verelst too to whom he wrote from Benares, while the conference was in session, "Since the writer entertains the most sincere attachment for the English *Sardars* and specially for the governor, *he is steady and invariable in the treaty* that was first concluded between him and the English." He expressed the hope that the English too will be firm and constant therein, and till the last day of the writer's life be immovable like the wall of Alexander."<sup>68</sup> He told the deputation that he was surprised that they thought of forcing on him a fresh treaty in order to limit his army. If their object was to keep a sort of balance among the various powers, he said, why should they not make the same demand on the Ruhelas who possessed a larger army than his? Then he repeated the reasons he had already given in his famous letter of explanation in August last, why the English demand was unjust. As the deputation recorded, their demand agitated him and he would not listen to their remonstrance. The deputation rightly judging the moment opportune, delivered to him the committee's first letter which he read carefully and then denied <sup>69</sup> having written to Verelst that his preparations were due to the war in the Deccan, the deputation listening to him with coolness. The committee's letter produced the desired effect and the wazir "moderated in some degree." At this psychological time the deputation explained that they did not insist on the conclusion of a

<sup>68</sup> C. P. C., II. 1206 and 1207.

<sup>69</sup> As a matter of fact Shuja had not written that his preparations were due to the Deccan war. Verelst himself had informed the committee that he had asked Shuja to raise more troops in view of the war. The argument that the troops raised during the war were redundant and should be disbanded did not convince Shuja.



new treaty ; all that they desired was an agreement explanatory of the first article of the last treaty in which it was mentioned that neither party should give room for distrust or jealousy. After much discussion and many difficulties the deputation elicited from the wazir that not less than 35,000 troops were sufficient for the protection of his country and for the collection of his revenues. This information was enough for them to insist that the wazir should maintain no more than this number and the latter was obliged to agree. Having gained this important, though preliminary point, the deputation now proceeded to lay down the strength of the various branches of the reduced force of 35,000 men. As the English policy primarily aimed at a considerable and permanent reduction of the wazir's scientifically trained battalions under the supervision of French officers, the deputation prescribed the strength of trained infantry in his service as 7,000 ; but Shuja having rejected the number as too inconsiderable, they had to raise it to 10,000. The wazir had to submit, but he pleaded that "the limitation should extend to the English sepoy battalions only and that the disposal of the rest should be left to his own pleasure." But the deputation would not accede to it and proceeded further with the work of fixing the number of irregular troops as well as that of cavalry. This led to a tenacious haggling, the deputation beginning with low figures and raising them only gradually, while the wazir, who had conceded the point "with great reluctance," would not only not lower his demands but would also propose higher numbers. "The nearer we came up to his terms," wrote the deputation, "the higher he grew in his demands." The negotiations at this stage seemed to have reached the breaking point and Shuja, feeling aggrieved and agitated, talked of going to Calcutta and appealing to the governor and council. The deputation too assumed an unbending attitude and giving up the negotiations declared that they were proceeding to the imperial presence at Allahabad, obviously to request Shah Alam to direct the wazir to reduce his forces to the limit prescribed by the Calcutta

government. This announcement served the purpose of a clever device to make Shuja, who had known to his cost the puppet sovereign's attitude towards him, relent and come round and accept the figure dictated to by the deputation. Being obsessed by the thought of the consequence of his resistance, he sent word that the deputation had misunderstood him and that he was willing to comply with their demands. Next day he agreed to all the English terms without any protest. From the beginning to the end the English diplomacy was substantially backed by military force, as the second brigade was despatched towards the Karamnasa and was at this time posted a Phulwari, "a measure," in the words of the deputation, "highly expedient in giving weight to our negotiations with the Vizier." Thus by argument, persuasion and pressure of the English authority, wrote the deputation to the committee, they succeeded in dictating a new treaty which crippled the growing military strength of Shuja-ud-daulah.<sup>70</sup>

#### 17. The terms of the treaty and its importance.

After one or two alterations had been made in the draft at Shuja's request the treaty as finally signed by both the parties on 29th November and ratified by Shah Alam a few days later contained the following terms :—

The deputation having expressed their satisfaction with the wazir's "steady attachment to the English," the parties renewed and confirmed the treaty of 1765, "letter by letter and article by article," and agreed to add to it the following as an explanatory clause in order to eradicate doubts and jealousies and to establish the present harmony on the most durable basis.

Shuja-ud-daulah agreed not to entertain an army of more than 35,000 men, which must include troops of all description whether sepoys, cavalry, peons, artillery men, rocket men or troops of any other denomination whatever. Of this

<sup>70</sup> Deputation to Ben. Sel. Com., dated Benares, 30th November, 1768, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 4th January, 1769.

number only ten thousand were to be infantry, divided into ten battalions and including in the above number subahdars, jamadars, havaldars and all the officers of the various ranks. Likewise cavalry, including all its officers, was to be ten thousand strong. The Najib regiment "consisting of 5,000 men with matchlocks" was "to remain always on its present establishment," all future improvement in the equipment and arms, etc., being ruled out as illegal. There were to be 500 men for artillery, "and that number never to be exceeded." As regards the remaining nine thousand and five hundred troops, they were to be classed as irregulars and "neither to be clothed, armed or disciplined after the manner of the English sepoys or Najib regiment." "And His Highness also engages to arm none of his forces, besides the ten thousand men mentioned in the treaty, after the English manner, nor to train them in the discipline of the English troops." In consideration of the wazir's compliance with the above conditions the deputation on behalf of the Bengal government bound themselves that "neither the present Council of Fort William, nor any future Council, shall hereafter introduce any new matter relative thereto, besides what has been formally agreed to and now concluded upon."<sup>71</sup>

In addition to signing the above document, Shuja, in compliance with the deputation's wishes, made the following agreement in his own handwriting to implement the treaty: "I promise to disband all the troops I now entertain exceeding the number of 35,000 horse and foot, and to comply with all the articles in the treaty within the space of three months. Written the 19th of the month of Rajab of the year of Hijra, 1182" (which answers to the 29th November,<sup>72</sup> 1768.)

There is no doubt that this treaty checked the strength and progress of the wazir's army and freed the English from apprehension from their ally. But it did not greatly reduce

<sup>71</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 4th January, 1769; letter to C.D., 6th January 1769.

<sup>72</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 25th January, 1769.

his military establishment, for, despite his assurance<sup>73</sup> to Smith that he had disbanded his troops in excess of 35,000, Shuja did not really disband most of them. As a matter of fact, it was confidently talked of that "he did not, in consequence of the treaty of Benares, dismiss one soldier from his service."<sup>74</sup> It is also equally true that he made no addition<sup>75</sup> to the number he possessed in November 1768. The net result, therefore, was that the Oudh army's progress was temporarily checked and the wazir had to give up the policy of building up a really formidable force for four years and a half, after which the ban was lifted by Hastings. But the claim that "Verelst's achievement in respect of his Oudh policy is of more than ordinary interest *inasmuch as he not only averted through personal influence and diplomatic pressure a threatened rupture with Shuja-ud-daulah, but cemented the existing alliance with him by means of a fresh treaty*,"<sup>76</sup> is not only extravagant, but was never before put forward by himself or his admirers and apologists. Verelst's own confirmed conviction that there was no satisfactory evidence to show that the wazir was preparing for a war has already been quoted more than once. "A threatened rupture" was far from being a reality. Whether the existing alliance was cemented or its very foundation was shaken by the new treaty can be judged from the fact that this treaty left a permanent scar on the heart of Shuja-ud-daulah, who, as a shrewd contemporary Englishman noted, "saw that his ambition and schemes of aggrandisement would ever be encountered by the jealousy of the English, *whom he now beheld with mistrust and resentment* ; and knowing the French were the common enemy of our nation, the Wazir held out many inducements to engage their assistance."<sup>77</sup> This treaty, which according to

<sup>73</sup> Smith to Verelst, 27th Feb., 1769; Deputation to Verelst, 2nd Jan., 1769.

<sup>74</sup> George Forster, *A Journey, etc.*, p. 158.

<sup>75</sup> Ben. Sel. Com.'s letter to C. D., 6th April, 1769.

<sup>76</sup> Dr. N. L. Chatterji's *Verelst's Rule in India*, p. 83. For Hastings's permission to enlist as many troops as Shuja wanted see C.P.C., IV. 507, 508.

<sup>77</sup> George Forster, *A Journey, etc.*, p. 158.

Dr. N. L. Chatterji cemented the alliance, " was a sore point with Shuja-ud-daulah "<sup>78</sup> and the policy of suspicion underlying it was wisely reversed by Warren Hastings in 1772, even before he discovered to his surprise, " the absurdity " contained in this treaty of 1768. Hastings's strong condemnation of this treaty can be read in his letter to Sir George Colebrooke, dated 26th March, 1772 and in an entry dated 28th August, 1773 in his Benares Diary.<sup>79</sup> This governor cancelled the treaty altogether on 8th September, 1773, permitting Shuja to have as big an army as he liked. The treaty is thus open to criticism from considerations of political expediency which was its sole justification in the eyes of its authors.

Morally it is even more indefensible. In the first place, the deputation's own admission that after their interview with the wazir they had " reason to be satisfied with his steady attachment to the English " militated against the policy of the imposition of a new and obviously undesirably harsh treaty. In the second place, Shuja-ud-daulah was not bound by any article of the treaty of 1765 to reduce his forces and yet in the name of the first clause of that very treaty (the treaty of 1768 being made out only an explanatory clause of the first term of the Allahabad treaty) he was made to agree to the reduction of his army. In the third place, inasmuch as this treaty prejudiced the relations between Shuja and the English, it violated the spirit of the first clause of the Allahabad treaty wherein it had been laid down that " everything shall be carefully avoided which might hereafter prejudice the union now happily established ", and the blame must be laid at the door of Verelst and his colleagues. And lastly, this treaty undermined the reputation of the English for faithful adherence to their engagements not only in the eyes of Shuja-ud-daulah but also in the eyes of other Indian princes.

<sup>78</sup> Dr. C. C. Davies, *Warren Hastings and Oudh*, p. 15.

<sup>79</sup> Both quoted in *W. Hastings and Oudh*, pp. 14-15; C.P. C., IV. 507, 508.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### SHUJA-UD-DAULAH'S RELATIONS WITH SHAH ALAM, 1765-68 ;

#### HIS EFFORTS TO REGAIN *DE FACTO* WAZIRSHIP.

##### 1. Differences between Shuja and the emperor.

Ever since they had come to a parting of ways after the battle of Buxar (Oct. 1764), there was no love lost between the titular emperor Shah Alam and his erstwhile wazir Shuja-ud-daulah. The bitterness of feeling, kept alive by the emperor's actually blessing the English war against Shuja (1764-65) and proclaiming it as one between the rebellious wazir and his sovereign, was further accentuated by the treaty of Allahabad (August, 1765) which, while it tore two fertile and flourishing districts out of Shuja's dominions to provide a means of subsistence for Shah Alam at the wazir's expense and to his dissatisfaction, at the same time gave the emperor cause for disappointment as the wazir's timely submission had totally frustrated the materialisation of Shah Alam's scheme of himself becoming the master of the whole of Shuja's territory. Moreover the Mughal sovereign still nursed a grievance against his wazir for the latter's having displayed vanity and superior airs, which were insulting to his imperial dignity, during 1761-1764. There was, however, an outward patching up at Clive's instance in July 1766 and as a sequel to it Shuja was reappointed wazir which was but an empty designation. Apart from the restricted importance of the dignity, whatever work still pertained to it, such as the management of court affairs, the relations between the king and the English, and those with Indian powers were in the hands of the deputy-wazir Munir-ud-daulah, a supple courtier in high

favour both with the emperor and the English. It was Shuja's cherished object to have full control over the imperial court as *de facto* wazir and become the real medium of transaction of the court business with the English and with other powers. He was anxious that the royal tribute from Bengal should pass through his hands and that the world should look upon him as the sole manager of what had yet remained of the dwindled empire.

In view of Shah Alam's aversion for him and Munir's complete hold over the former's mind, it was not possible for Shuja to regain his rightful place at the court through an appeal to the emperor or by an attempt to please his sovereign by means of useful service, as he was not given an opportunity of rendering any service at all. Hence, he cleverly sought the intercession of the English governor of Bengal for the solution of an essentially domestic problem, and a clever diplomat that he was, he made it appear to the Calcutta authorities that his restoration to full power at the court was essential for safeguarding and furthering the company's interests as much as his own. Verily he chose the right instrument and in the end a year and a half's exertion was crowned with success.

## **2. Shuja's early representations to Verelst : charges against the court.**

Shuja-ud-daulah's voluminous correspondence with Verelst reveals him a cool, calculating and shrewd diplomatist, ever on the look-out for seizing an opportunity of gain for himself or his people, able enough, to make out his case as favourable as it could be, descending to the level of a low flatterer when seeking to gain an important point and rising to that of a defiant despot when his own prerogatives were encroached upon or his interests were likely to be in jeopardy. While the Abdali invader was still spoliating the Punjab and the English in Bengal were taking all precautionary measures for the defence of their territory, he informed Verelst that the emperor was anxious to depute Munir "with an amicable

message to His Afghan Majesty," and insinuating that such a step was likely to be prejudicial to the English interests, suggested that the governor should write to the emperor "recommending that the affairs of the presence (court) may be placed in the hands of the writer or some other person and that whatever he (governor) thinks proper, expedient and useful, may be put into execution." He reminded Verelst that both he and Clive had promised their support to him and if he were thus recommended he "will labour with all diligence to perform whatever the governor signifies," since he considered the English "as the leaders and principals in every transaction and does not look up to any one but them." A fortnight later the wazir caught hold of a more suitable opportunity for urging the full restoration of his powers at the court. In his usual blundering manner Shah Alam had advised the English to confine their line of defence to Bihar and had expressed his desire, of course secretly, to go and join the Abdali, if the latter advanced as far as Delhi, and this latter secret was divulged to the English by one of the emperor's courtiers. Anxious to make capital out of it, Shuja ascribed it to the encouragement the king gave to unworthy favourites who influenced his policy and indulged in intrigue with the result that "the throne has become as light as air and the Vizarat disgraced." He explained how in compliance with Clive's repeated wishes he had gone to Allahabad to take charge of premiership, but had to return disgusted as the emperor did not give him his confidence, but in alliance with court minions intrigued against him; and should therefore anything happen at court contrary to the intention and interests of the English, he should not be held responsible for it, as he had no share in his Majesty's counsel. "For more cautious management and security of affairs," he urged for the full restoration of his powers with the governor's intercession and proposed that the Bengal tribute should be transmitted to the court through him, not "for his own aggrandisement", he said "but in order that His Majesty may henceforth be closely locked within the arms of

the English *Sardars* and of the writer (Shuja)" and "might be prevented from attempting further intrigues." Shuja-ud-daulah suggested an interview and a personal conference between him and the governor for settling these important problems satisfactorily<sup>1</sup>.

### 3. Verelst decides for a conference ; counter-charges from Shah Alam and Munir.

While acknowledging Shuja's letters, Verelst admitted (22nd May, 1767) that he had for long been convinced of the truth of confused state of affairs at the court and agreed to hold a conference for the adjustment of the points raised by the wazir. But he requested Shuja either to journey to Calcutta or to meet him at or near Chhaprah where he would invite Munir too, and meanwhile assured the wazir "that there is nothing the writer more ardently wishes than the fulfilment of all His Excellency's desires." He invited Munir to attend the conference and asked him to communicate with Shuja to whose choice the place and venue of the conference were left. The emperor was requested to permit Munir to attend it.<sup>2</sup>

Well aware that Shuja's effective control of the royal affairs must mean his own degradation and downfall, Munir immediately on getting scent of his designs, intimated to Verelst "that on account of his allegiance and faithful attachment to the King...his attention to the prosperity of the English Company, and his support of the governor and the English *Sardars*, many gentlemen and people of rank have conceived the bitterest enmity against him, and are laying schemes and snares to set him and the governor at variance with each other." He assured the governor that in watching and safeguarding the English interests he was like a true agent and deputy to him at the imperial court and he "should rest satisfied on all points." He also brought it to Verelst's notice that "diverse people" (of course, meaning

<sup>1</sup> C.P.C., II. 311. 377 and 392.

<sup>2</sup> C.P.C., II. 401 402 and 404.

thereby Shuja only) were anxious to have Bengal tribute pass through their hands. Shah Alam, who greatly resented Shuja's attempt to secure the position of a virtual dictator and that too with foreign help, took up the cause of Munir, in conjunction with whom he resolved to checkmate the wazir by following the policy of meeting intrigue with intrigue. First of all he requested Verelst to pay the royal tribute through Munir, and after being apprised of what the governor had to say about mismanagement of the royal affairs, he wrote that Munir was "a true and faithful servant of His Majesty and a friend of the English *Sardars*". The whole business of the sublime *sarkar* appertains to him and in everything he has full powers." He warned Verelst against listening to calumnies against Munir, "since on account of his good services to His Majesty and attachment to the governor, he has many enemies who are night and day labouring to sow dissension between him and the governor."<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. Further charges and counter-charges ; Bundelkhand question.

In almost ceaseless succession Shuja went on flooding Verelst with letters, elaborating arguments in favour of his proposal, giving details of the doings of the anti-wazir clique, multiplying instances, some real and others dubious, of the emperor's secret negotiations with various powers, particularly the Afghan invader from Kabul, prejudicial to the company's interest and time and again pressing the governor to proceed to Allahabad and persuade Shah Alam to place the royal administration in his hands. The main burden of the wazir's charges were the mismanagement of the imperial affairs and the court's hostile attitude towards his and the English interests. He, however, took care to explain that he had no grudge against the emperor, and that it was wrongly reported by some mischief-mongers that the latter was displeased with him. He was alienated from the wazir by



the machinations of Munir-ud-daulah who tenaciously clung to the unlawfully acquired power, which he was extremely unwilling to resign.<sup>4</sup>

The relations between the emperor and his wazir were further complicated by the Bundelkhand question. It has been related in the previous volume of this work that Bundelkhand having once been a part of the Allahabad *Subah*, Shuja had made more than one unsuccessful attempt to recover it from Hindupati before he had undertaken his famous campaign against the English. At the congress of Chhaprah in July 1766 he discussed the question with Clive who seemed to have held out the prospect of the settlement of the question to the wazir's satisfaction.<sup>5</sup> In July, 1767 Shuja reopened it, as he feared that Hindupati, who had sent his agent to Calcutta, might succeed in purchasing English protection against his aggressions. He wrote to Verelst that both Clive and Carnac had given their assurance to him on the question and the emperor had permitted him to occupy the districts, and therefore he begged the governor to give no 'countenance' to Hindupati's agent and to prevail upon Shah Alam to grant him a *sanad* for them. But the emperor was no longer favourable to the wazir and coveting the districts for himself, he asked for English assistance in conquering Bundelkhand and promised them in lieu of it the cession of half of that principality. The governor must have been for some time on the horns of a dilemma; but it did not take him long to tackle the problem successfully. He advised Shuja to wait for some time when the English might be in a position to help him, which was not possible then, as the Marathas (being greatly interested were sure to interfere, if Bundelkhand were invaded) were on friendly

<sup>4</sup> C.P.C., II. 412, 414, 422 423 etc., and 601 and 602.

<sup>5</sup> Clive wrote in his parting minute of 16th January, 1767 : "I am of opinion that as soon as he (Shuja) shall have formed an army etc.—he will be eager to extend his territories particularly by the acquisition of Bundelkhand district, formerly annexed to the subahship of Allahabad" (Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1767, p. 28.)

terms with them, and he thought it imprudent to antagonise them at a time when a war in the Deccan was about to break out. At the same time Verelst requested Shah Alam not to quarrel with Hindupati for a mere trifle and advised the rajah to show allegiance to the emperor.<sup>6</sup>

While the Bundelkhand difficulty was thus temporarily got over, the other urgent problems, namely the medium through which the Bengal tribute should pass and whether the wazir or Munir should control the royal affairs, remained altogether unsettled. The idea of a conference between Verelst, Shuja and Munir did not materialise, as the wazir fell ill, and could not travel to Chhaprah. Under these circumstances Verelst had to invite Munir alone, and Shah Alam, while giving Munir leave of departure, feared lest the latter should be compelled to resign his power into the hands of Shuja-ud-daulah and therefore wrote to the governor that he should regard Munir's sentiment as his Majesty's, as he (Munir) "is the sole ruler and manager of His Majesty's auspicious *sarkar*, and he considers the honour and reputation of Munir-ud-daulah as his own.....". There is no other servant in whom His Majesty ever reposes his confidence." He concluded by directing Verelst "that if any other person applies to the governor for employment near His Majesty's sacred person, the governor may in no way countenance him, but give him a plain and explicit answer that such is His Majesty's will and satisfaction."<sup>7</sup> The Emperor's fear seemed however, to be premature. Munir interviewed Verelst in Calcutta in October, 1767, but no action was taken on any of the points raised by Shuja, and the emperor's favourite plan to an expedition to Delhi and the question of the regular transmission of the Bengal tribute were discussed.<sup>8</sup> Nothing definite was, however, achieved even as regards these problems.

<sup>6</sup> C.P.C., II. 487, 506, 524, 567, 587, 652, 660 and 671.

<sup>7</sup> C.P.C., II. 537 and 564.

<sup>8</sup> C.P.C., II. 638.

### 5. Munir's attempts to prejudice the English against Shuja.

During his visit to Calcutta Munir must have perceived that the governor and council were more inclined to support Shuja's claim to *de facto* wazirship than his own pretensions of keeping all power in his hands as deputy wazir. In view of these facts, for Munir to retain power at the court there was only one way, namely to discredit his rival Shuja by misrepresenting him as unworthy and inimical to the English in Bengal. In pursuit of this object Munir launched on his way to Allahabad, a malicious propaganda of vilification and intrigue against Shuja and, as we have seen in the last chapter, sent several letters to Verelst, making three important suggestions, calculated to flatter the English and injure the wazir. In the first place, he desired the English to obtain possession of Chunargarh, which belonged to Shuja, but was of great strategic importance and commanded the route from Bengal to Oudh. In the second place, the French commander Gentil should be removed from Shuja's territory. In the third place, a confederacy consisting of the Ruhelas, the Bangash chief and the English should be formed to checkmate the activities of the wazir who, taking advantage of the war in the Deccan, was alleged to be organising an alliance with several powers against the company.<sup>9</sup> He reported that arms and ammunition were being smuggled from Chandranagar into Oudh, and a little later added two more proposals, namely that Barker should be authorised to raise three new battalions and supplied 3,000 stand of arms and that the emperor's force should be augmented by 5,000, as the danger to the English from the side of Oudh was imminent. He further brought to Verelst's notice that owing to the war in the Deccan certain designing men (meaning only Shuja) were bent upon mischief and were circulating all kinds of rumours and divulging the secrets not only of the Calcutta government but also of the house of the governor

<sup>9</sup> Of course Munir did not mention the wazir by name.

himself.<sup>10</sup>

As could be expected, Verelst at once approved of Munir's suggestion regarding Chunar fort and requested him to detect the persons engaged in illicit business of transporting arms to Oudh. He also wrote to the wazir complaining against Gentil. But he refused to believe that Shuja was organising a confederacy and preparing for a war with the English and expressed his deep displeasure at Munir's betraying apprehension and suspicion without explaining grounds for them. He directed Munir to proceed to Faizabad and endeavour in co-operation with Shuja to silence the evil-minded.<sup>11</sup>

#### 6. Shuja's complaints against Munir ; the Emperor supports the latter.

Meanwhile Shuja, being informed of the propaganda against him, vigorously protested against what "malicious people" had been propagating "with absolute malevolence" and condemned it as "a lie and an invention." He assured Verelst of his friendship and added "that his loyalty has at no time been withheld, and that his actions have neither been directed nor will ever be directed by anything but His Excellency's counsel and instruction." Then he once again appealed to the governor, to get him restored to power at the court. At the same time the wazir censured rajah Parsudh Rai, his wakil in Calcutta, for his failure to get any of the important questions entrusted to him, especially his restoration to *de facto* premiership, settled with the Fort William authorities, and asked him to bring it to the governor's notice that Munir, after his return from Calcutta, had publicly reported that "he has brought with him a letter of appointment from the Council and Mr. Verelst to the administration of the royal house," which declaration, Shuja thought, must be false. A regards the rumours of his

<sup>10</sup> C.P.C., II. 738, 787, 791, 817, 819 and 820.

<sup>11</sup> C.P.C., II. 800-805.

alleged intention to break with the English, set afloat by interested men, the wazir added, that Smith who was proceeding to Calcutta would inform the governor "what he has seen with his eyes, of the writer's rectitude and attachment. The governor will then be perfectly convinced of the writer's friendship."<sup>12</sup> Little did the wazir then know that Smith was a partisan of the emperor and Munir and that this English colonel whom he addressed as "his brother"<sup>13</sup> would not only change his opinions but also contradict himself without weighty reasons (*vide* Chapter XII.)

These proceedings prompted Shah Alam to counteract the wazir's efforts and to put in a vigorous plea in favour of Munir. He endeavoured to convince Verelst that Shuja had given the governor an exaggerated and false notion of the privileges and dignities of wizarat, and averred that neither the royal interests nor the safety and prosperity of the company demanded that Shuja should be called to Allahabad and put in charge of the royal administration. He desired Verelst to tell Shuja in plain terms that the emperor is "the sole and absolute sovereign of his own realm," and will never permit the pretensions of another to the administration of his affairs." Munir, he said, was a faithful minister and a well-wisher of the English, while Shuja was not, and the latter's sole object in trying to acquire control over the court was to "put his perfidies into execution." He opined that if the English had suffered the smallest reverse in the Deccan, Shuja's faithlessness would have become clear beyond dispute; and drew the governor's attention to the wazir's vigorous military preparations in times of peace, insinuating that these facts established his hostility towards the English.<sup>14</sup>

#### 7. Shuja exposes further intrigues of the court.

It has been mentioned that Verelst did not believe so many charges against Shuja and looked upon his claim to

<sup>12</sup> C.P.C., II. 799.

<sup>13</sup> C.P.C., II. 768, 799, 1365, etc.

<sup>14</sup> C.P.C., II. 834.



power as just. He asked the wazir not to place "any credence in a scandalous tale that has been circulated about him," and assured him "that the author of such a manifest forgery shall forfeit his countenance for ever." He did not, however, like him to quarrel with Munir and recommending him to the wazir's friendship, urged that both should regulate the affairs of the empire, and promised that if Munir opposed him in discharging the duties of wizarat, he would discontinue his friendship for him. Verelst believed that Shuja's failure to control the warring factions at the court and to exercise full powers of his office was mostly due to his absence from Allahabad and he gave him the sound advice that "nothing but his residence with His Majesty can prevail over the factions of the court and establish a general union<sup>15</sup>".

Before Verelst's orders instructing Munir to repair to Faizabad and co-operate with the wazir had reached the court, Shuja made an unsuccessful attempt to appease the emperor and petitioned to him to allow him to come to Allahabad and do his best to restore to the empire as much of its former territory as he could. But under the influence of the dominant party Shah Alam rejected the offer, refused to summon the wazir and dismissed his agent with the reply that he reposed confidence in none but the English, which, in the words of Barker was "as much composed for the perusal of the English gentlemen as for the Nabob." Naturally therefore Shuja would not slack his vigilance and activity and in representing his case to Verelst, referred to Smith for a full account of the intrigues at the court and requested him not to withdraw the English troops from Allahabad, lest the court intrigues that were carried on in secrecy should now be pursued without a mask. The emperor's negotiations with a Sikh leader named Jasa Singh furnished Shuja with another reasonable ground for complaining that momentous decisions were taken by the court behind his

<sup>15</sup> C.P.C., II. 802-805, 808.

back, and yet the public as well as the English would hold him responsible for shaping and guiding the imperial policy, simply because he was the nominal wazir. He told Verelst that although he had no axe to grind, "yet when the *munshis* (secretaries) of the court talk among themselves and boast that though the Vizarat was conferred upon the writer by the English *Sardars*, they have prevented him from assuming it, that it was meant as a name only, and that they have opposed and supplanted him, he cannot help thinking that these proceedings of the ministers and this opposition to the writer will reflect dishonour on the English *Sardars* as well as on the writer, united as we are." In reply to the governor's advice that party strife would come to an end, if he resided at the court he informed him that he had been there twice "with the same views," but had to return disappointed owing to obstinate opposition from "the minister of the presence" (Munir), and requested Verelst to write to the emperor "in such terms" that he may go to the court and "assert the actual and just privileges of the Vizarat and his other offices. He suggested that Barker might be instructed to invite him to Allahabad and "to establish and assist him."<sup>16</sup>

#### 8. The failure of Shuja's appeal to the emperor.

Sometime in March, 1768, Shuja-ud-daulah made one more direct attempt to conciliate the emperor, and sent his prime minister Elich Khan to Allahabad with a petition, containing usual professions of allegiance and loyalty and a strong appeal that he be given an opportunity to demonstrate his loyalty by actual service. Munir, who had received Verelst's instructions to go to Faizabad and co-operate with Shuja, took the opportunity of impressing on Elich Khan his friendship and attachment to the wazir, and wrote direct to Shuja, expressing great concern at his alleged displeasure with him for which, he added, he had not consciously given him any cause, and promising to see him in person to

<sup>16</sup> C.P.C., II. 848.

demonstrate the strength of his attachment. Shuja replied that if he really had that sincere attachment he spoke of, he was welcome and he would not discover any change in him.<sup>17</sup> But, as a matter of fact, Munir was not in the least sincere in his professions of loyalty and as he was strongly backed up by Shah Alam, he refused to transfer power to the wazir. Elich Khan's mission therefore proved an utter failure.

This failure synchronised with Shuja's receipt of information from Verelst that he had written to the emperor advising him to allow the wazir to discharge the work of premiership and to give him his full royal confidence, and also that he had instructed Munir to proceed to Faizabad and satisfy the wazir with his conduct. But at the same time the governor had written that he would not be in a position to press the emperor any further, if he did not listen to these representations. These letters revived the hopes of Shuja who thanked the governor for his "affectionate and generous conduct," and repeated his favourite argument that to be responsible for the king's doings, he must be in charge of the court affairs. He took pains to assure him that there being no emoluments attached to wizarat, his sole object in pressing for his restoration was his regard for the good name and welfare of the English. And although he did not propose to allow Munir to act as deputy wazir with the wazir's seal in his possession, he wanted to know Verelst's views in the matter, by which he promised to abide without hesitation.<sup>18</sup>

### 9. Verelst decides to back up Shuja.

The governor had for some time been convinced of the mismanagement at the imperial court, due to the ascendancy there of men of an undesirable type. Under the influence of these men Shah Alam had been devising 'fanciful' schemes, corresponding with various Indian powers, especially the Marathas and the Sikhs, and displaying a keen desire to quit

<sup>17</sup> C.P.C., II. 888, 891.

<sup>18</sup> C.P.C., II. 887.

Allahabad for Delhi, all of which was distasteful and sometimes even embarrassing to the Fort William authorities whose policy was one of prolongation of the imperial stay at Allahabad for an indefinite period, as the emperor's presence there was of great political advantage to the company. Among the crowd of impoverished mediocrities of the decadent court there stood Munir ud-daulah, a shrewd, supple and selfish minister who was politician enough to realise the mockery of the emperor's pretensions to supremacy which, he knew, really belonged to the English, and therefore he was so genuinely loyal to their interests as to be sometimes disloyal to those of his master and suzerain. Being aware of it, the governor and council of Bengal immensely liked Munir, who flattered the governor's vanity in his numerous letters, frequently made him and his colleagues rich presents and asked Verelst to look upon him as his own representative at Allahabad, watching and furthering the English interests. But Shuja's clever and successful diplomacy gave the problem of his restoration to wazirship with full powers the appearance of a case, Shuja-ud-daulah *versus* Munir-ud-daulah, and compelled Verelst not only to pronounce his judgment but also to execute it. Shuja's arguments that the English themselves were responsible for his reappointment as wazir, that surely it could never have been intended that the dignity was to remain as purely nominal, that Munir was responsible for preventing him from assuming charge of his office, that the emperor was a helpless tool in Munir's hands and was often acting contrary to the English interests, that the English who were responsible for his appointment were morally bound to see that he was given powers of the office so that responsibility might not remain divorced from power, that being a real friend and ally of the company its interests were safe in his hands, and that there being no emoluments for wazirship, he was not actuated by selfish motives, seemed powerful indeed and the governor finally decided in favour of Shuja's *de facto* restoration. It is probable that along with the above

arguments political considerations might have swayed the governor's decision. Shuja was a powerful hereditary prince with the highest reputation in the country and therefore a useful ally and in a choice between him and Munir who was no more than an influential courtier without any territorial backing, the former must have been preferable for considerations of expediency. Moreover, the Calcutta government was considering to force on the wazir an arbitrary and unjust treaty (Treaty of 1763) and most probably Verelst thought it impolitic to follow the policy of cutting both ways.

Whether politics entered into Verelst's decision or not, he came to the conclusion that Munir was to blame and took him to task for declaring that he had been appointed "the sole manager" of the royal administration and wrote to Shah Alam accusing Munir of ill-conduct and "the feelings of jealousy" he entertained towards the wazir. The governor explained to Munir of "the folly of his past conduct" and warned him that if he maintained the same attitude towards the wazir, it would lead to undesirable results. He wrote (2nd March) to Barker at Allahabad, disapproving of Munir's attempts to replace the wazir, and directed him to bring about a reconciliation between them and support Shuja in his just rights as wazir. He requested Shuja to allow Munir to continue as his deputy (naib-wazir),<sup>19</sup> but the initiation and directions of policy were of course to be concentrated in Shuja's hands.

#### 10. Munir's reaction to Verelst's orders.

When Munir received Verelst's letter of February 19, instructing him to proceed to Faizabad and pacify the wazir he did not seem much disposed to relinquish power, and the emperor, who backed him up in his unreasonable pretensions, informed the governor, most probably at Munir's instance, that the latter had "not uttered a syllable" in his presence about his exclusive appointment to the royal administration

<sup>19</sup> C.P.C., II, 874, 876, 877; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 2nd March, 1768.



and that whoever supplied this information spoke "a falsehood." He expressed his desire not to permit Shuja to possess full powers of his office. Next day Munir himself drew Verelst's attention to his helplessness, as the wazir was already much displeased with him and the emperor would not allow him to proceed to Faizabad, while the governor would imagine he was wilfully avoiding compliance with his orders. Admitting that the emperor might be subject to the influence of unworthy and unprincipled men, he maintained that Shah Alam did not undertake any measure without the governor's consent, and he denied the charge that he had declared himself to be sole manager of the emperor's household. Munir concluded with his usual assurance that "he will continue zealous in the Company's service, while he lives."<sup>20</sup>

More than a week passed and Munir was not allowed to stir out of Allahabad, and the latter informing Verelst of the state of affairs wrote that he was in a fix, and that if it was the governor's pleasure, he would go to Faizabad without the emperor's permission.<sup>21</sup>

Shah Alam would not, however, consent to Munir's going to see Shuja, obviously because he saw in it the beginning of the subversion of his own authority. He adopted stiff attitude and expressing his displeasure with Verelst for his orders to Munir, wrote to him in his own hand that none but he himself had authority in these matters and the governor should "avert his ears from the representations of men who conceal the foulest designs under the fairest faces, and by whose machinations the royal affairs have come to this pass." Munir too, being backed by his master, pleaded that it being "an affair between a sovereign and a subject, he cannot set out (for Faizabad) without the orders of His Majesty," and that "it will be impossible for His Majesty and the Wazir to join hands with mutual sincerity" unless Verelst himself came to Allahabad and brought about a reconciliation between them. If, however, the governor could

<sup>20</sup> C.P.C., II. 880, 889, 893.

<sup>21</sup> C.P.C., II. 905.

not come, he should summon him (Munir) to Calcutta for giving the details about the deadlock.<sup>22</sup>

### 11. Shuja's emotional appeal to Verelst.

Munir thus postponed the execution of the governor's orders for a month. Shuja's patience was now sorely tried, and charging Munir with wilful disobedience, he wrote to Verelst, "It is evident that Munir-ud-daulah has not yet returned to the right path and that in spite of all the letters and friendly efforts of His Excellency, he has never thought of it seriously, but spins out time in daily procrastinations and supports his intriguing character with the strongest obstinacy of spirit." He held Munir solely responsible for the emperor's alienation from him and for "being the original cause of all these arts and calumnies" which caused a rupture between him and Shah Alam. He proposed that such a man should not be retained as deputy-wazir and the post might be conferred on his eldest son Asaf-ud-daulah. But if it was decided not to remove Munir, the wazir's seal should be entrusted to Barker. He felt convinced that the day of his restoration was not far, as "His Excellency is now bound by his promises" and was actively trying to redeem them. The wazir, however, expressed his dissatisfaction at the emperor's attitude and forwarding copies of two royal letters in which Shah Alam had taken strong objection to Verelst's unwarranted interference with court affairs, suggested that the emperor's fancies needed sobering control. "Now that His Majesty's mind is so much affected by the governor's representations," he observed, "as to be transported beyond every thing worthy of the Royal Majesty, let His Excellency gather therefrom how excellently His Majesty is inclined to the English cause and to the English counsel. He has cast both to the winds. And since these are his notions of right and such his sallies of passion, His Excellency should remember that the writer desires nothing in which His Excellency is not

<sup>22</sup> C.P.C., II. 909, 911.

equally concerned. In order to goad Verelst to expedite his restoration he wrote "that he will never cast a thought upon this object again, nor move a step from hence," but would remain "quietly in his own house, indifferent and retired, with no other care than the preservation of friendship and support of the English *Sardars*.....ready to fulfil whatever instructions the governor pleases to send him."<sup>23</sup>

## 12. The failure of the Bengal government's intercession for a compromise.

At last at a meeting of the select committee, held on April 15 of 1768, it was decided to take immediate steps to restore Shuja to power, and Barker was directed to ask the emperor to admit the wazir to his presence and confer on him the power of wizarat, as he had been appointed to that office at the intercession of the English. Barker was informed that the committee would be obliged to take steps to support Shuja, if the emperor refused to comply with their request, but if he agreed, the wazir should be advised not to bring his army to Allahabad except a retinue suitable to his dignity, lest it be offensive to the Mughal lord. In case Munir in any way interfered, he should be informed that his conduct would disturb the friendly relations subsisting between him and the English.<sup>24</sup>

By a coincidence on the very day that the committee adopted the above resolution Barker was at Faizabad and in pursuance of Verelst's instructions of an earlier date (28th February and repeated on 2nd March) conferring with the wazir on the fundamentals of a compromise. Shuja bitterly complained that Munir was still in possession of the wazir's seal and demanded his removal from the court, otherwise he would not go to Allahabad to be humiliated. He assured Barker that he was not against the king's favouring Munir, but he did not want interference in the wizarat. On his

<sup>23</sup> C.P.C., II. 874, 894, 910.

<sup>24</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 15th April, 1768.

return to Allahabad Barker intimated Shuja's demands to Shah Alam who expressed his unwillingness to allow him to function as wazir. He denied Shuja's charge that Munir was working as *de facto* wazir, and said that Baqir Ali Khan, Keeper of the Seals, Muhammad Sadiq Khan deputy in the artillery department, and Madru-ud-daulah, Chief Justice, were Shuja's nominees.<sup>25</sup> Owing to the obstinacy of both the parties, Barker's efforts met with a failure and the friction between the king and his wazir became more acute than ever.

### 13. Munir yields reluctantly.

Notwithstanding his solemn promise not to write anything further about wizarat, Shuja did send more than one reminder to Calcutta and replying to the governor's advice that "he should proceed by degrees in the business of the wizarat", he wrote that he wished by no means "to precipitate matters." And he repeated his sentiments about Munir and how he had successfully frustrated the governor's earnest endeavours to end the dead lock.<sup>26</sup>

Shuja's repeated accusation of Munir provoked Shah Alam who put in a strong plea in defence of his old favourite's conduct. He explained that Munir was not guilty of disobeying the governor's orders, as he had not accorded him permission to proceed to Faizabad, and far from making any representations against Shuja, he (Munir) had played an important part in getting him reappointed as wazir. Munir's rise was not due to mere royal favour, it had been earned by years' devoted and meritorious service since the time of Alamgir II. He was appointed deputy-wazir since the very day of Shuja's reappointment as wazir, for the latter was raised to the premier's post on condition that he would consent to Munir's appointment as his deputy not only in wizarat but also in his other offices. The emperor alluded to the wazir's father Safdar Jang's rebellion against Ahmad Shah and enumerated Shuja's disloyal acts, such as his fighting

<sup>25</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 3rd May, 1768.

<sup>26</sup> C.P.C., II, 946, 948.

with the English during 1764-65 against the imperial advice, and asked Verelst to come to Allahabad to hear from him a detailed account of the wazir's conduct and of his sentiments about wazirship or agree to the emperor's journeying to Calcutta, as the problem was not likely to be solved without a personal conference. Munir too taking up the same line of argument charged Shuja with breach of the agreement when two months after Clive's departure for England he sent three of his favourites to Allahabad to assume charge of the deputyship of his various posts. So far as he was concerned, he pleaded not guilty and explained that the phrase "sole manager" was used for the emperor and not for himself.<sup>27</sup>

Munir's reasoning appeared like special pleading and did not satisfy Verelst who stuck to his original decision and reiterated that he (Munir) had styled "himself in his letter the sole administrator of the royal house." Greatly disappointed, the old courtier, felt helpless and taking leave of the emperor on 2nd June 1768 left for Patna on the plea of attending his son's marriage and thence he desired to proceed to Calcutta to present his case before Verelst and in fact to throw himself on his mercy. But Shuja, fearing lest the governor should be softened by the old nobleman's personal entreaties, requested him not to give Munir countenance, otherwise "he will never in future pay any regard to what His Excellency writes and says to him." But if he remained firm, "the writer's (Shuja's) affair will be settled to the entire satisfaction of himself and the governor." As a matter of fact Verelst's policy in this respect was strictly consistent and he had already commanded Munir once more "to give up his pretensions and quit all secret thought as well as open professions of being the sole administrator of the royal house." This firmness produced the desired effect and Munir was obliged to bend and to promise "to act agreeably to the Governor's high commands and to resign himself

<sup>27</sup> C.P.C., II. 950, 951.



to his mercy", as "his life and property are deposited in the hands of the governor and the English gentlemen."<sup>28</sup>

#### 14. Shah Alam's final indictment of his wazir.

Shah Alam keenly felt the absence of Munir and sent him repeated orders to be back without delay. But the latter refused compliance on pretence of illness, and the emperor had to ask Verelst many a time to direct Munir to return, as court business was suffering through his absence. But the governor replied that owing to his age and infirmities Munir was now unfit to perform the onerous duties of a minister. Yet Shah Alam continued insisting on Munir's return and on his unwillingness to accept Shuja as his wazir. He had already sent Daya Ram Pandit, a trusted assistant of Munir, to Calcutta with a strong royal indictment of Shuja in which an attempt was made to show that the latter was a perfidious and dangerous man, and an ignorant, incompetent and disloyal wazir, and to persuade Verelst not only to give up his support of the wazir but also to be on guard against his machinations, which were likely to be injurious to the company's interests. This libellous but interesting document, laid before Verelst on July 11, 1768, recapitulated the history of the relations between the emperor and Shuja and described how Shah Alam was strayed against his will into a war with the English and how Mir Jafar and Vansittart got him separated from Shuja whereupon it was decided in consultation with the English that both the wizarat and the dominions of Shuja should be conferred upon Prince Akbar Shah. But despite the toil and loss of men and money involved in the subjugation of Shuja's territory, the *Subah* of Oudh was restored to him and the emperor had to give his consent to this arrangement as also subsequently to Shuja's appointment as wazir owing to his regard for Clive's counsel. But these favours, though they meant grave injustice to a prince of blood imperial, produced no impressions on Shuja, and "once

<sup>28</sup> C.P.C., II. 956, 996—1010, 1026, 1074.

more did this *Sardar* prove himself to be unworthy of good fortune. He attained to an important and high dignity without any pains or trouble, knew not the duties of it, and thought of nothing but how to obtain that honour from the English *Sardars* which he had lost and for which he began warlike preparations. Now he is aiming at bringing His Majesty's fortunate and propitious person again into his power by a thousand wiles and stratagems. But His Majesty is too well acquainted with the traitors produced in that family ever to be deceived again." By "his wicked machinations" he prevailed on the governor to make in his favour frequent representations to the emperor which Verelst did as he "is not versed in the policies of the *Umra* (nobles) of Hindustan, by which they have reduced this great Empire to such distress and weakness." In the end the document warned Verelst "not to be misled by the wiles of any one" and informed him that as the emperor's safety depended upon the safety and welfare of the English, he had raised three additional battalions of sepoys under Barker as a means of defence against Shuja's aggressive designs.<sup>29</sup>

This imperial mandate, containing as it did some facts and some misstatements, did not influence the governor who was not for a complete alienation of Shuja from the English.

#### 15. Shuja's final attempt to win the emperor's good-will.

The absence of Munir, who had been greatly, if not wholly, responsible for Shah Alam's alienation from his wazir, softened the emperor's attitude towards Shuja, and as both Shuja and Verelst noted, the Mughal lord was now inclined to listen to the governor's representations and advice. Shuja, therefore, took this opportunity of making an attempt to pacify the emperor by sending, about the middle of July, a trusted agent named Imam-ud-din with three

<sup>29</sup> C.P.C., II. 1038, 1042, 1076, 1088, 1096, 1109, 1116 and 1044.

important proposals for his acceptance. Firstly, he offered his allegiance and service and agreed to appoint Munir his deputy, if the emperor were pleased to permit him to function as wazir; secondly, he begged that the Bengal tribute should be received through his hands; and thirdly, he should be permitted to reduce Hindupati of Bundelkhand, so as to augment the royal revenue. Shah Alam immediately rejected the last two proposals and approved of the first, namely, functioning of Shuja as wazir, only if the latter agreed to appoint Munir deputy-wazir *unconditionally* and to sign an agreement to that effect the draft of which was prepared at the emperor's orders. Shuja had no objection to either of the conditions, if Munir bound himself that he would "act in nothing without my (Shuja's) privacy and that of the English *Sardars*," and also if the king gave an undertaking in writing that if Munir failed to abide by the above agreement and acted without Shuja's advice and concurrence, then Shah Alam would not admit him into the court and allow Shuja "to perform the functions of Wazir with his own hands." Although both the parties were now willing to negotiate peacefully, yet the difference between Shah Alam and Shuja was even now fundamental, that is, who should direct the court policy, Munir or Shuja, and therefore the negotiations broke down when the emperor refused to append his signature to the agreement drawn up by Shuja. Shah Alam again began harping on Munir's virtues of loyalty and competence, and urged his immediate return and asked for a reply of his indictment from Verelst, while Shuja recommended the withholding of arrears of the Bengal tribute, as "it will have a good effect and bring his business to a happy conclusion."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> C.P.C., II, 1077, 1085, 1088, 1098, 1116, 1145, 1185; Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., 28th July, 1768, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., August 10th of 1768.

16. The Emperor and Shuja reconciled ; the latter becomes *de facto* wazir

It will be recalled that both the emperor and the wazir wished to have a personal conference with the English governor, as each believed that he would be able to convince Verelst of the correctness of his view-point, and that the governor twice made up his mind to proceed to Allahabad but each time, for one reason or another, he had to cancel his visit. But two urgent problems were crying for an early solution, reduction of Shuja's military strength and his restoration to full powers of wazirship. Accordingly a deputation, consisting of Cartier, Smith and Russel was sent, as we have seen in the previous chapter, to Allahabad to see the emperor and Shuja and execute the committee's decision regarding these two problems. The deputation was instructed to bring about a reconciliation between Shah Alam and Shuja by recommending the latter to be reinstated as *de facto* wazir and by persuading the emperor to pension off Munir as "an improper person to continue in the royal house." After having dictated a fresh treaty to Shuja, the deputation took Munir, who was on his way from Patna to Benares, to the wazir's camp and effected a reconciliation between them on 30th November, 1768. Accompanied by the wazir the deputation next proceeded to Allahabad and waited on Shah Alam. On being presented before the emperor, Shuja-ud-daulah behaved with the utmost humility and Shah Alam became so much pleased with him that he almost forgot his old resentment and bestowed upon him his own royal suit—one of the highest honours that could be conferred on a Mughal noble. The wazir now got the full powers of the office, for which he had been striving since his reappointment in 1766. Out of deference to his feelings, the emperor dismissed Fateh Ali Khan and some other Mughal officers who had deserted Shuja to join the enemy during the late war with the English. Rahim Khan and Muhammad Ali Khan, who had similarly turned against the wazir, now apologised,

were forgiven and taken back in the Oudh army. Agha Mirza, deputy superintendent of the artillery department, was removed at Shah Alam's request and Mirza Hasan Ali was appointed in his place. After the reconciliation the wazir returned to Faizabad in order to spend the month of Ramzan at his capital.<sup>31</sup>

The reconciliation was so complete that Shah Alam gave the wazir his confidence and friendship, besides the full powers of his office. "Through His Excellency's intervention," wrote Munir to Verelst some time later, "a complete reconciliation has taken place between the King and the Wazir, so that they are two bodies with one soul, and will remain intimately connected like milk and sugar, as long as they live. His Majesty now relies entirely on the Wazir, and his bounteousness towards the latter will daily increase." Munir almost confessed that the estrangement between them was largely due to him, when he wrote: "The writer was never offended with the Wazir *in his heart*, but acted in obedience to the commands of the king, the shadow of God. Foolish and interested mischief-makers had caused the Wazir to be angry with the writer. But their machinations have now been exposed and the Wazir is now greatly pleased with the writer."<sup>32</sup>

### 17. Why Shah Alam made peace with Shuja.

There is no doubt that the principal cause that influenced Shah Alam's decision in favour of the wazir's reinstatement was the strong and unwavering support given to Shuja by the English authorities in Bengal, especially Verelst, whom the titular emperor could not afford to displease. The deputation rightly observed that the king's "great condescension" was due to his "desire of acting in a manner most agreeable to us." Munir too ascribed the reconciliation to Verelst's friendship for the wazir and wrote, "Truly the governor

<sup>31</sup> Deputation to Verelst, Allahabad, December 31, 1768, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., January 25, 1769; *Harcharan*, 501a.

<sup>32</sup> C.P.C., II. 1335.



has shown the Wazir such friendship as can never be shown by anybody else in these times."<sup>33</sup> Munir's dubious attitude in the thick of the controversy seems to have contributed not a little to Shah Alam's relentment. This old minister, for whom the emperor had shown a marked partiality and even described him as one dearer to him than a brother or an only son, torn between allegiance to his master and obedience to his prop (the English) eventually deserted him and stayed away at Patna till the end of the episode. Finally the emperor who was anxious to march to Delhi and revive the ancient glories of the empire, but had been fully despaired of aid from the English who postponed the expedition from year to year on one pretext or another thought it expedient to make a compromise with Shuja-ud-daulah, as he had offered to regain the lost provinces of the empire and might contribute to the success of the proposed expedition to Delhi. Moreover, the greatest offence of Shuja in the emperor's eyes was the former's haughty bearing and airs of equality with his nominal sovereign. The wazir seems to have realised the folly of assuming airs and changed his demeanour into one of the utmost humility of a grateful vassal, thus paving the way for a reconciliation.

**18. Shuja's relations with Balwant : his designs against the latter frustrated, 1768.**

The Bengal government's deputation to Oudh and Allahabad was able to grapple with a few more problems by a personal conference with the wazir and the emperor, besides discharging successfully the two principal duties described in the foregoing pages. They tried to harmonise the relations between Shuja and Balwant and succeeded in persuading Shah Alam to allow the expenses of the English troops at Allahabad to be defrayed from the revenues of the districts on the opposite side of the Jamuna usurped by Hindupati of Bundelkhand. They extracted from the wazir the promise that he would dismiss from his service the French

<sup>33</sup> Deputation's letter of Dec. 31, 1768; C. P. C., II. 1335.

adventurer Gentil in six months, and accepted his (wazir's) request to release his arms deposited at Patna. But the deputation gave up the scheme of bringing about exchange of Shuja's dependency of Benares, Mirzapur, Ghazipur etc., the districts that formed the State of Benares, with the districts of Kora and Allahabad under the emperor for several reasons and more particularly because it was likely to be harmful to the interests of the company.<sup>34</sup>

The relations between Balwant and Shuja had never been cordial. After the battle of Buxar they had become particularly strained. Although he usually paid his tribute with strict regularity, Shuja was hostile to him because of his direct connection with the English who protected him against the wazir's injustice and also because the rajah was loth to place any reliance in his liege-lord's word, entrust himself to his mercy and pay him homage in person. The wazir's objection to English mediation in the settlement of his dispute with Balwant at the time of the treaty of Allahabad was overborne by Clive, and when at the Chhaprah Conference (1766) Shuja reopened the question he once again silenced him by requesting him to forgive the rajah, as he was a friend of the English. In order to victimize Balwant the wazir now adopted a fresh device, and made a demand of thirty lakhs of rupees from him on the plea that the rajah was making a considerable saving, as he had no longer to maintain a big force for the defence of the State which he had to do before the conclusion of the treaty of Allahabad, when Benares was a frontier State and exposed to danger from the side of Bihar. At Clive's intercession, however, it was decided that Balwant should pay three lakhs as *peshkash* (present) to the wazir. Agreeably to the above decision the rajah paid the sum, but the wazir, who renewed his demand next year, wanted to make it an annual charge over and above the tribute fixed from Benares. Naturally Balwant evaded payment, and Shuja

<sup>34</sup> The deputation to Ben. Sel. Com., December 3, 1768, and January 7, 1760. Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., January 25, 1769; Letters to Court, Jan. 6 and April 6, 1769.

made it a subject of repeated representations to Verelst, complaining at the same time that the rajah was refractory and did not show him due deference. The governor advised Balwant to show due regard and obedience to the wazir, but at the same time desired the latter not to demand any further the sum of three lakhs from the rajah. But Shuja was not the man to give up the point, and he made fresh representations, but this time revised his reasoning, appealing more to Verelst's sentiment than to his sense of justice, as the latter was likely to go against him. He argued that Balwant's country was well-cultivated, rich and capable of bearing more than the additional charge of three lakhs he was proposing. "Either the writer (Shuja) should be permitted to enjoy," he wrote to Verelst, "what is his own (three lakhs) or the governor should take it. What can be more proper than this, seeing that their interests are the same? Moreover, why should Balwant Singh possess such a sum of money gratuitously?" The change in the form of representation proved more effective and the governor wrote to Balwant regarding payment of the above sum; but as can be easily imagined, the latter succeeded in convincing Verelst that the demand was unjust. And the controversy continued till the dispute was settled by the Bengal government's deputation in December, 1768. The deputation held an investigation into the matter and informed Verelst that Balwant showed them the receipt of the payment made to Shuja whose demand on him was unjust. The wazir was, they added, utterly but unjustly dissatisfied with the rajah. However the episode came to an end and Shuja made no further demand on him.<sup>35</sup>

An interesting incident connected with the deputation's visit to Benares and throwing light on Shuja's character may be briefly noticed. During their stay Balwant, according to custom, would go to pay the wazir his respects every day as well as to them. Feeling himself powerless to do the rajah an injury or to impose an additional financial burden on him,

<sup>35</sup> C. P. C., II. 741, 805, 870, 1108, 1143; Deputation to Ben. Sel. Com., January 2, 1769.

Shuja wanted to satisfy his spite by belabouring and humiliating his vassal and accordingly he instructed his retainers not to admit Balwant into his audience without first disarming him at the gate. Next morning as the rajah approached the nawab's tents, his palanquin was stopped and he was asked to lay down his arms. The shrewd ruler of Benares immediately guessed the wazir's intention and managed to escape to the deputation's camp. Being baulked of his prey, Shuja felt disappointed and mounting his elephant followed the rajah to Cartier's tents where a reconciliation was brought about between the two. This episode so completely alarmed and alienated Balwant that he never afterwards paid any visit to the wazir, and after the termination of the conference went back to Ramnagar with a robe of honour from the deputation and without bidding good-bye to the nawab.<sup>36</sup> The relations between the nawab-wazir and his principal vassal remained strained till the latter's death on 23rd of August, 1770.

<sup>36</sup> *Balwant*, pp. 111-115 ; C. P. C., II. 1294, 1299. Khair-ud-din says that the rajah offered to pay a present of eleven lakhs to Cartier and one lakh to Munro (?), which he did not pay. He further says that Shuja managed to take a loan of three lakhs from Balwant.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A PERIOD OF CORDIALITY WITH SHAH ALAM

1769-1771

#### 1. Shah Alam's visit to Faizabad, February, 1769.

The cordiality between the emperor and the wazir was apparently so well established that Shah Alam was pleased to honour Shuja-ud-daulah with a visit to his capital in response to an invitation from the latter, and crossing the Ganges with his *harem* and court on 12th February, 1769 reached Faizabad, after several days' leisurely marches, on the 21st. Shuja received him with due ceremony many miles in advance and the party including Smith who had joined them at Amani Gang on the 20th, entered the capital of Oudh on the 22nd and encamped at Lal Bagh. During the king's three days' stay there was a formal exchange of visits and a well organised hunting expedition (24th), the graphic details of which can be read in Gentil's *Memoirs*. Shuja-ud-daulah spared no pains to make his royal guest comfortable and to show him every mark of respect and attention and the emperor was so immensely pleased at the reception that he wrote to Verelst in glowing terms of his visit to Faizabad "where His Majesty's brother, dear to him as life, wazir-ul-Mumalik Shuja-ud-daulah," he added, "performed the duties of loyalty and obedience most heartily." Shah Alam was presented by the wazir and his family Rupees 1,25,000 in cash, besides several trays full of jewels, rare wearing apparel, some elephants and horses, the total value of the presents in cash and kind being estimated at eleven lakhs. In the ceremonious meeting, the emperor expressed the strongest sentiments of forgiveness and oblivion and the wazir utmost loyalty and fidelity. The party left Faizabad on the 25th in the morning and re-entered Allahabad a few days later<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Harcharan*, 500a; *Imad*, 103; *Ghulam Ali*, II. 261-62; *Khair-ud-din*, 74-75; *T.M.*, 252a; *Gentil*, 264-67; *C.P.C.*, II. 1298, 1300, 1312-13; *Smith*



An instance of how suspicious even in normal times the British officers were of Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-daulah and how unwarranted sometimes their suspicions were is furnished by the emperor's visit to Faizabad. Despite Shah Alam's assurance that he was going on a pleasure trip, colonel Smith suspected the motive of both the emperor and Shuja for the reason that "the whole scheme was kept a secret till a few hours before the King's start," and refused to accompany the latter, only deputing some troops to form part of the imperial escort. The colonel imagined that Shuja's real object in inviting the king was to procure from him *sanad* for Bundelkhand, and as the company too was anxious to acquire it for itself, he asked for the committee's instructions as to what he should do, if the wazir got the cession of that region : and without waiting for a reply, he left Allahabad on February 19, and joined the imperialists on the way in order "to act as a check against their prejudicial negotiations." Smith's report filled the Bengal government "with suspicion", and they instructed him to request Shuja to disband his troops as agreed upon by the recent treaty. But the suspicion was groundless. Both the emperor and the wazir "expressed great satisfaction" at Smith's arrival and the latter did not discover any "prejudicial negotiations." At any rate neither he nor the select committee referred to them in certain terms in their subsequent despatches.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Shuja obliged to give up his claim to Bundelkhand.

Although the Calcutta authorities could not discover a definite evidence of any "prejudicial negotiations" between Shah Alam and the wazir, still suspicion lurked in their mind lest the latter should obtain the cession of Bundel-

to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 12 and 25, 1769; Letter to C.D., April 6, 1769. According to Ghulam Ali Shuja presented three to four lakhs of rupees, while according to Khair-ud-din the sum was thirty lakhs, which is obviously an exaggeration. Khair-ud-din's account has a few more inaccuracies.

<sup>2</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 17 and 25, 1769; Ben. Sel. Com. to Smith, March 1, 1769 and Ben. Sel. Com. to C.D., April 6, 1768.

khand from the king, and this suspicion was strengthened by the fact that the emperor expressed a greater desire for the recovery of that region after his return from Faizabad.

There is no doubt that Shuja had for long been anxious to reduce Hindupati and after 1765 he had more than once asked for English assistance for the conquest of Bundelkhand. But as Shah Alam had also laid claim to it, the Bengal government preferred his claim and expressed willingness to undertake the expedition if he agreed to assign a part of the revenue of that region for the expenses of the English troops stationed at Allahabad. This policy of reducing Bundelkhand for the emperor was, however, abandoned now, as it was thought that there being friendship between the king and the wazir the addition of Bundelkhand to the imperial domains would practically mean an addition to the power and prestige of Shuja, and the committee took prompt steps to prevent the possibility of either of the two undertaking an expedition to the rajah's country, which the English now wanted to be under their own sphere of influence. Accordingly Smith was instructed to inform the emperor that if he sent his force against Hindupati or granted Bundelkhand to Shuja, British troops would at once be withdrawn from Allahabad. The wazir too was told "that on the march of any part of his forces into the Bundelkhand country we should regard him as a violator of the general tranquillity and an invader of those countries the Throne pretends a claim to."<sup>3</sup>

The policy proved eminently successful. Shuja made no further attempt to acquire Bundelkhand.

### 3. Shah Alam plans an expedition to Delhi.

The main reason why the emperor had made up his quarrel with the wazir and honoured him with a visit to his capital was to enlist the latter's active support in the realisation of the greatest ambition of his life, namely, to instal himself on his ancestral throne and revive the old glories of the

<sup>3</sup> Letter to C.D., April 6, 1769.

broken empire. The imperial capital was practically defenceless and subject to danger from the ambitious and rising Sikh power of the Punjab, as Najib-ud-daulah had resigned in March 1768 and placed the administration of Delhi in the weak and inexperienced hands of his son Zabita Khan. The thought of the safety of his son Jawan Bakht and of the honour of his mother and other imperial ladies in the Delhi fort was extremely disquieting to Shah Alam who was being pressed by Najib to repair to the capital and assume charge of his legitimate duties.<sup>4</sup> Until recently he had built his hopes on Clive's promise of military assistance, if his lordship could secure sanction for the same from the authorities in England. Although it is clear that Clive's promise was no more than a diplomatic device, intended to postpone indefinitely the king's departure from Allahabad, as his stay there was obviously of immense political advantage to the company. Shah Alam, placing reliance on that promise and following his lordship's advice sent two letters to George III of Great Britain, the first in January, 1767 by the hand of Clive himself and the second in November, 1767, through Verelst and two to the East India Company, asking for military aid in his proposed expedition. Along with the first letter Clive was entrusted with costly presents by Shah Alam to be delivered to George, whom the Mughal emperor addressed as "his brother dear as life" and these included a string of pearls worth rupees sixty thousand and a studded betel-pot (*pāndān*), both meant for the English queen, and a knife, sword and shield, valued at nineteen thousand and intended for George III, and most probably some cash too.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently reminders were despatched to Clive and Carnac; but about two years passed away and no reply to any one of the above letters to the king and the company of Britain was received. Shah Alam at last became convinced that the English did not mean to afford him assistance and therefore he resolved to undertake

<sup>4</sup> C.P.C., II, 846, 847, 1103.

<sup>5</sup> C.P.C., II, 522, 652 and 1364; *Shigra-Nama*.

the expedition with the help of the wazir and of such other vassals as were likely to respond to his call. Having summoned Smith to his presence, the emperor informed him of his resolution and told him that owing to altered political situation endangering the safety and honour of the royal ladies in the Delhi fort and the English procrastination in complying with his requisition for aid, he thought it desirable not to wait for a reply from England. "It is improper for me," he added, "long to remain here with my hands before me (at the same time crossing his hands, as if bound.)" Thus he asked the English commander to procure for him an escort of two battalions and eight pieces of artillery that Clive had promised, and which was different from full military assistance that he could not promise without orders from England.<sup>6</sup> The emperor wrote direct to Verelst early in May, 1769, that relying on the king of England he stayed at Allahabad for four years during which period he sent two letters to George III, but received no reply. His annual expenditure amounted to seventy lakhs of rupees, while his income was only fifty. Fortunately for him Ratan Singh, ruler of Bharatpur, the only avowed opponent of the rejuvenation of the empire, had fallen under the dagger of an assassin and the country was free from enemies. He had accordingly decided to proceed to Agra, "taking Shuja-ud-daulah and the English *sardars* as his escort." Under these circumstances, he added, "a longer delay would be impolitic and hesitation unworthy." He informed the governor that he would leave Allahabad on 15th Muharram (21st May, 1769) and therefore he should instruct Smith immediately to accompany him with two battalions and eight pieces of cannon.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., May 1, 1769.

<sup>7</sup> C.P.C., II. 1364; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., May 1, 1769. The escort of two battalions promised by Clive was different from full military assistance which could not be promised by Clive on his own authority. Dr. N. L. Chatterji *vide* his *Verelst's Rule in India*, 123-25) has confused the two and therefore come to the startling conclusion: "The decision of the majority (of the Bengal Sel. Com., who voted in favour of the escort) was indeed hasty and impolitic. They did not realise the gravity of the risks involved in a march to Delhi and it is surprising to find that Verelst

### 3 An agreement between Shah Alam and Shuja.

The above decision was made in consultation with Shujad-daulah who had arrived at Allahabad, in response to the imperial summons, in the last week of April, and was due to the favourable political situation in the country caused by Ratan Singh Jat's death, willing co-operation promised by the wazir and friendly attitude of the Ruhelas and the Marathas to the royal cause. The wazir was clever enough to exploit the emperor's eagerness and exact from his suzerain a heavy price for his proffered services. He presented a number of articles for royal acceptance as conditions precedent to his attending the imperial march to Delhi and serving the emperor with a whole-hearted devotion for two years in the cause of recovering the lost territory and prestige of the dwindled empire and Shah Alam complied with all of them without exception. Firstly, he promised to confer on Shuja not only "all the honours appertaining to the vizarat", but also not to listen to insinuations and calumnies of interested persons against him. Secondly, he agreed to accept all representations of Shuja, if they were "conducive to the welfare of the sublime *sarkar*." Thirdly, he promised to accept the wazir's all those proposals that might "promote the welfare of the Company." Fourthly, he bound himself to look upon the wazir's friends as his friends and the wazir's enemies as his enemies. Fifthly, he gave word to issue a royal decree granting Shuja "customary as well as the extraordinary *jagirs* together with all the advantages appertaining to the vizarat ....." Sixthly, in order to make provision for meeting the expenditure of the additional forces that Shuja was required to raise and maintain in view of the proposed Delhi expedition, the king consented to "assign to the vizier a moiety of all the territory that will be conquered, for his expenses, excepting the *Khalisah Sharifah* and what will be required for His Majesty's personal expenses." Seventhly, he complied with Shuja's request that as regards wars, "all opera-

gave his assent regardless of the repeated warnings of the Directors."  
(*Ibid.* 125-26).



tions will be conducted according to the Vazier's representations. Nothing will be done contrary thereto." Eighthly, he conferred wizarat on Shuja "as an inalienable and perpetual office," pledging that he "will let his brother Shuja-ud-daulah hold the wizarat as long as his reign lasts, nor will His Majesty ever deprive him of that office, but will bestow upon him new honours." Finally, the emperor promised that he would invest the wazir's sons with appointments in the establishment of the imperial princes.<sup>8</sup> The agreement was witnessed by Smith in whose presence the superscriptions were written both by the emperor and the wazir. Shah Alam wrote that as the wazir was ready in the duties of obedience and loyalty, "His Majesty swears by God and the Prophet of God in the presence of Colonel Smith.....and agrees that he will at all times and on all occasions defend and support the honour and reputation, the life and fortune of Shuja-ud-daulah as well as his possessions both old and new ; and he calls Allah to witness that he will act in all affairs according to the Wazir's representations and not listen to the insinuations of interested people. Nor will His Majesty undertake any public affair without consulting the Wazir." On his part Shuja pledged that he "agrees before God and the Prophet of God and in the presence of Col. Smith...that for two years he will attend the victorious stirrup of His Majesty Shah Alam Bahadur Ghazi and apply himself with all diligence and earnestness to the strengthening of the Empire, the establishment of the laws and the royal authority and the promotion of the prosperity of the auspicious household." He further promised not to apply for leave for two years. "God is his witness," he wrote, "that he will on no account depart from the mandates of the presence, nor undertake any business without the royal approbation, nor listen to the insinuations of interested people, nor deviate in any way from this agreement. And if His Majesty either before or after the expiration of two years of his own accord grants him leave to depart from the presence, he will return to his own province. ....If His Majesty will graciously act according to the

articles to which His Majesty has been pleased to subscribe the writer will also not deviate a hair's breadth from this agreement."<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. The English dissuade the king from going on the expedition.

Shuja-ud-daulah, in informing Verelst of the emperor's resolution and of the agreement he had entered into with him, strongly supported Shah Alam's request for the loan of English troops and promised that he would look upon the English honour and welfare as his own, calling God "and holy *Imams* to witness that whatever ascendancy he may gain over the king's heart, shall always be employed in promoting the welfare and reputation of the English *sardars*."<sup>10</sup>

On 19th May the select committee resolved by a majority, Floyer and Alexander dissenting, to comply with Shah Alam's request and furnish him with two battalions of sepoys and four field-pieces of the lowest calibre under captain Harper. It was further decided (8th June) to lend him 600 stands of good English arms in order to assuage the king's feelings which had been injured by Smith's refusal to supply him with serviceable firelocks. While intimating the committee's decision, Verelst took the opportunity of assuring the king that "the English *sardars* with their entire army and resources will show the same devotion and make the same exertions in this expedition as they have so far done in the defence of the royal dominions and in defeating the wicked designs of the enemies of the House of Timur." But neither Verelst nor any other member of the Calcutta government was, as a matter of fact, really in favour of Shah Alam's migration from Allahabad and therefore the governor added by way of offering a cautious advice that "as the journey is long and as disturbances and upheavals are daily taking place in Hindustan, it is hoped that His Majesty will consult his ministers before he undertakes the expedition lest his auspicious person come to harm from the buffets of

<sup>9</sup> C. P. C., II. 1367 and 1369; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., April 25, 1769; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1769, pp. 271-280.

<sup>10</sup> C.P.C., II. 1368.

adverse times." Among the ministers whom Verelst desired Shah Alam to consult the most important man, next only to the wazir, was Munir-ud-daulah who was a protege of the English and at heart utterly against the king's departure from Allahabad ; and Verelst had already written to him, expressing surprise at "such a hasty resolution" and urging its abandonment on two grounds, firstly because of the rainy season being at hand, and secondly because of the highly disadvantageous agreement that the emperor had made with Shuja, conferring on the latter half the country to be conquered by the imperial forces. In view of this agreement, he added, "however fast money may pour into the royal treasury, it will not be sufficient for the successful termination of this expedition. In fact it will be so much labour lost." The governor concluded that Munir is "wise and experienced, and as his loyalty and foresight are indisputable, it is hoped that he will give His Majesty such advice as will best tend to the improvement of the affairs of the auspicious house and to the welfare of His Majesty." Munir knew what this advice was. Despite his best efforts, he, however, failed to persuade Shah Alam to give up the enterprise, and while agreeing with the governor that "to undertake such a great expedition with so much haste is contrary to the principles of wise and great *sardars*," he informed him that he did not take part in the deliberations that preceded the imperial resolution and pleaded his helplessness as the king and the wazir "are masters."<sup>11</sup>

##### 5. An attempt on Munir's life : his resignation.

The negotiations with the Fort William authorities were still in progress and the preparations for the intended expedition were in full swing when the imperial enterprise received a rude shock from an unsuccessful attempt on

<sup>11</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., May 9, 1769 ; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., June 8, 1769 ; C.P.C., II. 1383, 1400, 1462.

Dr. N. L. Chatterji (*Verelst's Rule in India*, pp. 124-28) has not taken notice of these letters of Verelst to Shah Alam and Munir, although they clearly give the intentions and policy of the English in Bengal.

Munir's life, made under the shadow of the royal court. Although this venerable noble no longer held the post of premier, he was still quite influential, and his opposition to the proposal of the migration of the court to Delhi as well as the jealousy of other nobles and officers had made him unpopular and a conspiracy had been matured to murder him. On 10th May, 1769, while Munir, accompanied by a few attendants, had reached the palace-gate after his return from an audience with the king, he was surrounded by some troops of the artillery department who insolently demanded an increment in and arrears of their salaries, and were in their turn roundly abused by the minister with a quick tongue. One of the suppliants moved forward and put a petition of their grievances into the aged minister's hands, and having drawn the latter's attention to it, placed his hand round Munir's neck and wanted to despatch him with a dagger. Just then a devoted follower rushing up to the front of his master took upon himself the stroke of the dagger aimed at Munir. The historian Ghulam Ali Khan, author of *Shah-i-Alam Nama*, who was with the minister, quickly snatched away the dagger from the murderer's hand, and his companion Sidi Ballal gave such a powerful blow of his sword in the chest that it killed the villain then and there. Some of the deceased murderer's companions rushed to attack Munir and his followers; but they were cut down and the aged noble was lucky enough to escape unhurt. There was a great tumult outside the court owing to Munir's party as well as the artillery men getting ready to put their quarrel to the decision of the sword, and the English battalions under Smith had to be moved for the protection of the imperial person. Shah Alam then sent for Munir and also Smith and through his intercession the dispute came to an end.<sup>12</sup>

Disgusted with the ways of some of the court officers and afraid lest there should be made another attempt on his life Munir resigned his post and informed Verelst that as his "life is nearing its last stage and the infirmities natural to an old man have deprived him of the ability to undergo the

<sup>12</sup> *Ghulam Ali*, II. 254—55; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., May 10, 1769.

fatigues of business and to struggle against the cares of life, he is desirous of taking final leave of His Majesty and retiring to the holy tombs where he will spend the rest of his life in penance and tranquillity." Neither the emperor nor Shuja succeeded in persuading him to cancel his resolution, and his resignation was accepted on 5th June when Shah Alam gave him leave of departure, conferring upon him his own royal suit and some jewels. Munir left for Patna the same day *en route* to Calcutta to live there under the company's protection.<sup>13</sup>

### 6. A Mutiny in the wazir's army

While Shuja-ud-daulah was making arrangements for the imperial expedition, there occurred a fearful mutiny in his army at Faizabad. On 24th May, 1769 some four thousand troops of three of the wazir's oldest and best disciplined battalions under the command of Sayyid Ali, Khawaja Basant, and Sheikh Chand, whose salaries had been three months in arrears, were seized with dissatisfaction and unrest and marching to their master's palace on the river-side began to demand their salaries in a threatening manner. Their defiance of authority and fomentation of tumult and confusion compelled the nawab to open fire from the heavy guns arrayed on the battlements of the fort and to requisition help from the English troops stationed at Faizabad. At 12 o'clock during the night following 24th May Shuja sent for captain Harper and asked him to send a grenadier company immediately. Accordingly Lieutenant Dacosha with two grenadier companies was deputed to reinforce the wazir's troops, who were still loyal to him, while the remaining part of the English battalion was kept in readiness for an emergency. About sunrise on the next morning the whole of the English battalion under the command of Harper, except two companies that were left to guard their magazine, moved up to the sandy expanse, opposite to the nawab's gardens, where it was drawn up, in accordance with Shuja's wishes, so as to

<sup>13</sup> C.P.C., II. 1402 ; *Ghulam Ali*, II. 256 ; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., June 5 and 8, 1769.



overawe the rest of the wazir's army and to prevent it from joining the mutineers who had collected in battle formations at a little distance from and in front of the English battalion, with their rear towards the river. As soon as this arrangement was complete, Shuja ordered six of his big guns to play on the mutineers with such effect that very soon the whole of the two and best part of the third out of the three rebellious battalions were broken and dispersed, and the remaining offered to surrender and were allowed to return to their quarters. Quite a good number of the runaways was overtaken and slain by a detachment of cavalry sent in pursuit of the mutineers through the town. By 11 o'clock order was restored and at about noon the wazir's troops returned to their cantonments. Harper too with his battalion came back to his quarters, leaving grenadiers as a safeguard of the wazir's person. After the mutiny was thus quelled Shuja's sons, relations and chiefs came to offer their congratulations, and the wazir expressed satisfaction at the timely assistance rendered by the English troops.

Shuja-ud-daulah dismissed 1,500 troops belonging to the three mutinous battalions and threw a good many of the mutineers into confinement with a view to make a public example of those of them who were suspected to have been ring-leaders. He was afraid lest the mutiny should spread to the other battalions of his forces whose salaries too had fallen into arrears. But he made prompt arrangements for clearing one month's dues and fortunately the mutiny did not lead to "further consequences." The net result, however, was that "The orderly battalion which was the best in the Nabob's service is entirely reduced and dispersed, and about half of the other two are collected." The loss was so considerable that it was likely to take a long time and much attention on the part of the wazir to supply the reduced strength of his army. Although Harper's battalion in the wazir's pay by their presence and prompt compliance of the nawab's orders exerted wholesome pressure on the mutineers the mutiny was looked upon with satisfaction by the English, and the select committee of Fort William agreed with

Smith that it "may be deemed a favourable circumstance not only from its having occasioned and immediate reduction of his (Shuja's) military force," but also because of the opportunity of timely help the English troops rendered to the wazir.<sup>14</sup>

### 7. The expedition to Delhi postponed.

Early in June, Smith conveyed to Shah Alam the select committee's resolution of 19th May agreeing to furnish him with an escort of two battalions, and the emperor thereupon summoned the wazir who arrived at Allahabad on 13th June. Shuja advised immediate start, as it would be possible to reach Kora before the beginning of the rainy season and from that place to push through with alacrity and with greater prospect of success the negotiations for an alliance with the Ruhelas and the Marathas, Kora being in close proximity to the dominions of the Bangash and the Ruhela chiefs. But although he disagreed from Verelst's view that the royal person would be exposed to danger during the expedition and replied to the governor that "by the grace of God he got the Empire of Hindustan, that by the grace of God it is now free from all disturbances and that as long as the English troops and his other vassals are near his stirrup to serve him, he has nothing to fear," Shah Alam was against moving out during the rainy season. Moreover the emperor, who had been greatly impressed by the discipline, training and strength of the wazir's army during his recent visit to Faizabad, had now become somewhat suspicious of Shuja's ability to carry the expedition to a successful conclusion owing to the mutiny among his oldest and best trained battalions and owing to his inability to act against the English policy of hostility to the enterprise. And above all the governor's advice administered through Munir to the effect that however fast money might pour into the imperial treasury, the expedition would

<sup>14</sup> *Harcharn*, 501b ; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., May 27 and June 2, 1769 ; letter from Harper, May 25, 1769 ; Harper to Smith, May 29, 1769 ; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., June 16, 1769.

not succeed as the emperor had agreed to make over half the country to the wazir, went home, and this together with Munir's own earlier exhortations and Smith's endeavour to influence the king's mind against Shuja produced a change in Shah Alam's attitude towards his prime minister. As Smith wrote to the Calcutta authorities on 26th June, he had advised the emperor to retain sovereignty, army, and the territories of Kora and Allahabad in his own hands and not to confer them on the wazir. The atmosphere of jealousy and suspicion engendered by the recent attempt on Munir's life which militated against a concerted action by the rival elements in the court, and the latter's failure to complete preparations and get together money for financing the enterprise also powerfully contributed to the postponement of the expedition. Har Charan Das, the author of the contemporary *Chahar-i-Gulzar-i-Shujai* blames the Fort William authorities for the miscarriage of the imperial plans, which charge is undoubtedly partly true,<sup>15</sup> for Shuja's indifference was due mainly to his allies's hostility to the scheme.

Whether Shuja-ud-daulah really wanted the emperor to proceed on the expedition immediately we have no means of ascertaining correctly. But he welcomed Shah Alam's decision to postpone it for the time being, as his presence was necessary in his own dominions for recouping the strength of his army that had suffered considerable reduction by the recent mutiny, and for completing fortifications of Faizabad that he had started some time ago. Now he got his second son Mirza Saadat Ali Khan (who was destined to succeed to the *masnad* of Oudh as the fifth ruler of the dynasty) appointed as deputy wazir and left him at the court with Rajah Lachhmi Narayan as his adviser, and himself returned to Faizabad. The young Mirza then aged about 12 or 13 years was at this very time betrothed to the daughter of Madr-ud-daulah, an influential noble, which further strengthened the wazir's party at the court. Shuja's influence was once again re-established, as much of the important court business was

<sup>15</sup> C.P.C., II. 1520; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., June 26, 1769  
Harcharan, 502a.

transacted through Lachhmi Narayan and the emperor was practically surrounded by his nominees and dependents.<sup>16</sup>

### 8. Some notable events, 1769-1770.

Some important and interesting events that took place during this period and which throw a welcome light on the history of the times and character of Shuja-ud-daulah may conveniently be noticed here. During the winter of 1769-70 the wazir, in accordance with his usual practice, went out a hunting to Gorakhpur, and crossing the river Rapti penetrated into the limitless forest of that region. Here he encountered three wild elephants who made a furious charge on the nawab's elephant, causing a fearful rout in his retinue. In the combat Shuja's presence of mind and intrepidity stood him in good stead and two of the wild beasts were shot dead, but not before they had killed two of the wazir's best elephants. With great exertion the drivers were able to capture the third wild animal and put him in chains. In February 1770, he undertook another expedition, but this time on the bank of Sarju (Ghaghra), and bagged fourteen tigers.<sup>17</sup> One of these having been wounded by a bullet, had managed to escape and the wazir, accompanied by Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan and the Gosain brothers hastened in pursuit, and crossing the river, forbade his companions to shoot at the tiger, himself attacked it with his sword and brought it to the camp. This was followed by another excursion in the jungles of Balrampur and Bahraich, as already noticed, in May following, whence he returned to Lucknow, marrying there the daughter of Ali Beg Khan Shitab Jang on 22nd June, 1770.<sup>18</sup>

In the years 1769-70 there was a famine, accompanied by epidemics, especially small-pox, which occurred in Bengal and

<sup>16</sup> *Harcharan*, 502a; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Feb. 16, 1770 ; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., January 26, 1770.

<sup>17</sup> The Manuscript (*Harcharan*'s) has lions (*shér*); but I think tigers is more likely.

<sup>18</sup> *Harcharan*, 501b and 502b.

thence spread to Allahabad and Oudh, affecting the country as far as Delhi. During the first of these two years there was no failure of rains and no famine in Shuja's territories ; but as large quantities of grains were transported from Oudh to Bengal, where famine was extremely acute, corn became very dear throughout his dominions, and wheat was sold at ten seers a rupee at Allahabad. But scanty rainfall in the summers of 1769 and 1770 resulted in a famine which lasted from September 1769 to October 1770. In the district of Allahabad, and perhaps in Oudh also, there was a severe hail-storm in April 1769 and hail-stones said to be from half a seer to one seer<sup>19</sup> in weight covered roofs and streets of the Allahabad town and did not melt for more than a day. Thousands of cattle and wild animals fell victims to it. The fearful epidemic of small-pox also took a heavy toll of lives and there was no family in Allahabad that had not to mourn the loss of one or more of its children. In March, 1770 Faizabad was gutted with a severe fire that reduced many buildings to ashes, and in order to prevent it from spreading to other quarters thatches of poor men's houses were pulled down by orders of the wazir's government. The orders remained in force for some time, and it being summer thousands of poor people were practically scorched in the sun. On 14th April of the same year Lucknow too experienced even a more devastating fire and the conflagrations could not be extinguished for three days. Six thousand persons, 8,000 horses and a large number of cattle perished in the flames.<sup>20</sup>

In November, 1770 the wazir recalled Umrao Giri Gosain, who had been sent to the Marathas in October, in order to quiet the suspicion of the English who had been pressing the nawab to sever all connections with the invaders. He had already summoned back his envoy Trimbak Das from the Maratha camp for the same reason. The Maratha wakils who had been with the wazir for a long time were now given leave to return to their masters. The wazir might have

<sup>19</sup> One seer of that time was equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  seer of our time.

<sup>20</sup> *Khair-ud-din*, 182 ; *Harcharan*, 502b-503b.



taken this step for another reason. The Marathas had for the time being given up their designs against Ruhelkhand and were preparing to proceed to Delhi, and Shuja therefore did not consider it necessary to continue negotiations with them. At any rate the nawab now despatched his son Mirza Jangli with some troops and artillery to Mahdighat on the Ganges, south of Qanauj, to protect the Oudh frontier, and watch the movements of the Marathas.<sup>21</sup>

About the end of 1770 died in the fulness of age and honours Rajah Lachhmi Narayan who had faithfully served Shuja's family for three generations. He was Saadat Ali Khan's chief adviser and guardian at the imperial court at the time of his death. The same year Khawajah Basant was raised to the headship of the wazir's artillery in place of Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan who had fallen under his master's displeasure, and Girdhar Singh was appointed as deputy to Khawajah Basant.

It was Shuja-ud-daulah's habit to enjoy himself with music, dance and women as often as he could find leisure from the business of the State. On 7th December, 1770, he went to his gardens and menageries with his friends for enjoyment. A *mina bazar* was held there and dancing girls, musicians and professional actors and actresses (*Bhānds*) gave their performances. Like a real precursor of the frolicsome taste and voluptuous times of the later nawabs and kings of his dynasty Shuja asked one of the attractive female dancers whether she could ride his horse and make it gallop. She replied that she would, if the horse were bestowed on her on successfully complying with the wazir's request; but if she failed and fell down dead, she added, she would think that she had given her life as an offering (*tasadduq* for her master. Shuja agreed, and the clever dancer rode, galloped and controlled the horse. She was duly rewarded with the horse being conferred upon her.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Harcharan*, 503b; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., October 11, 1770

<sup>22</sup> *Harcharan*, 503b-504b.

### 9. Munir restored to naib wazirship.

It will be recalled that despite the emperor's insistence to the contrary, Munir-ud-daulah had resigned and quitted Allahabad on 5th June, 1769. Shah Alam, as a consequence, became highly displeased,<sup>23</sup> accused Munir of having embezzled the royal money, appointed in his place Shitab Rai as his agent for the realisation of the Bengal tribute and asked Verelst "to reject whatever he (Munir) says or writes, and regard as void and forged whatever letters he presents in His Majesty's name.....for there are several covers bearing the royal seal still in possession of Munir-ud-daulah." Daya Ram Pandit, the court's representative at Calcutta, was removed as he was intimately connected with the ex-minister, and Khyali Ram was appointed to fill the vacancy. But so effective a control had the English acquired over Shah Alam's affairs that even a good-natured governor like Verelst refused to recognise the emperor's nominee, issued peremptory orders for Khyali Ram's immediate return from Murshidabad and informed the king that "Khiyali Ram cannot be appointed as His Majesty's wakil without the permission of the writer (Verelst) and the Council." A little later the governor urged the reinstatement of Munir, who was on his way to Calcutta, on the plea, that the court affairs were mismanaged, that the letters from the court were couched in an improper style and that the emperor was under the influence of designing men of low birth and intelligence and had not punished those who had hatched a conspiracy under the very shadow of the imperial court against the ex-minister's life. But the real reasons were that the English policy was opposed to the undisputed ascendancy of Shuja at the court and that Munir was thought to be the proper person to safeguard the English interests at Allahabad and to persuade Shah Alam to give up his ambition of proceeding to Delhi. Verelst similarly requested the king to reinstate Daya Ram Pandit, and refused to

<sup>23</sup> Dr. N. L. Chatterji, *vide* his *Verelst's Rule in India*, p. 128, wrongly says that the emperor's displeasure was due to the miscarriage of his expedition to Delhi. For the truth see C.P.C., II, 1542, 1700.

accept a *Khilaat* (robe of honour) from the emperor on the ground that it was not sent through the wazir and that it was brought to him by Fazal Ali Khan who, according to the governor's information, was one of the leaders in the recent attempt on Munir's life and was even now intriguing against him. Verelst also wrote to Shuja that the ex-minister was willing to spend the rest of his life in the emperor's service and therefore he should be recalled to Allahabad.<sup>24</sup>

The emperor repudiated the charge that he was under the influence of men of low and deceitful minds and that he had listened to the insinuations of interested men against Munir, and informed Verelst that Munir had resigned and retired of his own free will and against his desire and advice which facts were known to Smith who had under the imperial orders, persuaded Munir in vain to continue to serve his sovereign. And finally he explained that the real causes of his agreeing to permit Munir to retire were two, namely, the ex-minister's "ungenerous and rooted suspicion of the Royal faith," and his desire to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca and requested the governor to approve of the arrangement made after Munir's retirement.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile Verelst was succeeded by Cartier (Dec. 26, 1769) who followed the policy of his predecessor in pressing the emperor to pardon Munir and reinstate him as deputy wazir. Shuja too, who was now given full authority "over all the affairs of the Royal House" (on 6th January, 1770), further interceded for Munir's pardon and recall, and Shah Alam, being hard pressed for money, the English having pursued the policy of withholding the Bengal tribute to bring pressure on the court, left the matter to the decision of the wazir.<sup>26</sup> Munir was thus pardoned, recalled and reappointed deputy wazir (December 1770).

<sup>24</sup> C. P. C., II. 1521-23, 1542, 1569, 1612, 1620, 1627, 1668, 1672, 1673, 1687 ; Vol. III. 15, 16, 43.

<sup>25</sup> C.P.C., II. 1700.

<sup>26</sup> C.P.C., III. 24, 25, 248, 281, 617.

## 10. Munir at Faizabad : Shuja entertains him.

While on his way from Calcutta Munir had thought it desirable to interview the wazir at Faizabad through whom his reinstatement had been brought about, before proceeding to wait upon the emperor at Allahabad. Accordingly he left Benares for the wazir's capital with Hisam-ud-din Khan who had arrived at the former town to receive the old minister under orders from Shah Alam, and was cordially received and entertained by Shuja. Among a variety of entertainments provided one was an exciting match between two semi-wild elephants on the sandy expanse of land below the wazir's palaces, held on 20th March, 1770. The defeated combatant fled away, chased by the victor and in the commotion thus caused six men were trampled and killed. The next day a grand musical entertainment was arranged to which some five thousand dancing girls, actors, actresses, musicians of every description, magicians, acrobats etc. etc., were invited. The public too was permitted to witness the show and accordingly there was a huge cosmopolitan gathering. The assembly's pleasure was disturbed by a deer in the zoo nearby that got excited, broke loose and attacked some men and killed one woman. This caused a tumult and the spectators took to their heels in confusion, none daring to face the excited animal. Shuja himself attacked the deer and shot it dead by a musket.<sup>27</sup>

Munir repeated his visit to Faizabad in January next and was the wazir's guest from 6th to 23rd of the month. The object of this visit was twofold, namely, ascertaining Shuja's attitude towards the imperial project of a march to Delhi, and his sentiments and policy towards the English, and Munir, the then most sincere Indian well-wisher of the company, testified in plain words that "After a long conference with him he has found out that the latter (Shuja) is a sincere friend of the governor and the English *sardars*, a loyal servant of His Majesty and a will-wisher of the

<sup>27</sup> *Harcharan*, 504a ; C.P.C., III. 508, 510, and 538.

Company." As regards Shuja's policy towards the emperor's expedition, Munir wrote that he was of opinion that "the Wazir will not do the least thing without the advice of the governor."<sup>28</sup>

### 11. A few important incidents, 1771.

A few incidents that occurred in 1771, may be recorded at this place, as they reveal the wazir's policy towards crimes. One Diyanat Rai, a wealthy and well-known banker of Fatehpur, probably Tehsil Fatehpur in Barabanki district, was charged with defalcation of the wazir's accounts. He was therefore condemned sometime in 1770 to an indefinite period of imprisonment along with his whole family, consisting of his wife, sons, grandsons, and other dependents, all numbering eighteen souls. The banker died in prison after one year, and his wife, sons and other members of the imprisoned family consisting of seventeen persons committed suicide inside the state prison by swallowing poison on March 21, 1771. On 6th July Shuja inflicted barbarous punishment of mutilation on twenty-three men who were guilty of either selling or drinking wine. Of these unfortunate men one was deprived of his one hand and the remaining twenty two were condemned to mutilation of both their hands. Two other men charged with a similar offence were blown from a gun.<sup>29</sup>

Faizabad passed the night following 9th August under a great consternation produced by repeated flashes of lightning, roaring of clouds and peals of thunder. The lightning fell on the house of a dancing girl (Bannu) causing the death of three women.

During the night of 25th August a Muslim soldier belonging to the regiment of Shaikh Ahsan inflicted at night a number of grievous sword cuts on Ghaibi Ram, a distinguished ascetic of the Bairāgi order of Ayodhia. The victim survived in a precarious condition for a day only, and succumbed to the

<sup>28</sup> C.P.C., III. 562 and 604.

<sup>29</sup> *Harcharan*, 504b and 506a.



wounds on the 26th. He was a notable hermit and was also famous for his charity. Besides feeding two to three hundred mendicants every day, he used to provide comforts to strangers who went to him for assistance. There is no record of the cause of the murder: nor is there any mention whatever whether the assassin was called to account for the crime.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Harcharan*, 506a.

## CHAPTER XV

### SHUJA-UD-DAULAH AND THE IMPERIAL EXPEDITION TO DELHI

#### 1. Mir Qasim's renewed activity ; the English again suspect Shuja, January-March, 1770.

In January, 1770, there were strong rumours that the Marathas had once again set their huge army in motion with the object of invading Northern India and that Mir Qasim, who had failed in 1766-67 to win Ahmad Shah Abdali's assistance in his projected scheme of recovering Bengal, was making preparations to turn the occasion to his advantage. Reports were received at Calcutta from Shitab Rai, Gailliez and Harper that the ex-nawab had arrived at Agra and was negotiating with the Rana of Gohad, Imad-ul-mulk, Haider Ali, the Marathas and the French for their joint assistance in his proposed invasion of Bengal. He was also reported to have sent messengers to the emperor at Allahabad. A little later Shuja too sounded a note of warning, though he at the same time prophesied that Qasim's enterprise was bound to end in shame and disgrace. These reports alarmed the government of Bengal and the new governor Cartier, who had assumed charge of administration on December 26, 1769, directed Gailliez, commander of the British battalions at Allahabad, to watch the emperor and the wazir and discover their secret designs and transactions. On January 16, Cartier delivered a minute in the course of which he maintained that the Marathas, the Sikhs and Najib-ud-daulah were in favour of Mir Qasim and would invade the company's dominions, and that having no rival like Munir to encounter, Shuja's influence at the imperial court was predominant. He pointed out the necessity of watching the movements of Shah Alam and Shuja whom he suspected to have been in league with Qasim and his confederates.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> C. P. C., III. 31, 79 ; Harper to Cartier, January 26 and 28, and

The select committee now resolved to take immediate steps to counteract the alleged designs of Mir Qasim, and although they were highly suspicious of the king and the wazir, yet the governor wrote to them to procure authentic information about the ex-nawab's movements and to act in concert with the English to put down the pretender. Cartier also wrote a flattering letter to Dunde Khan, an important Ruhela chief, to impress upon him "that Mir Qasim is not only the enemy of the English but of the Rohillas and of all the chiefs of Hindustan and that his 'braggadocio' about his intention of invading Bengal is due to the instigation of the Marathas and the Sikhs," and to advise him not to assist the ex-ruler and not to allow the Sikhs to cross the Sutlej and the Marathas to cross the Narbada, as these measures were necessary "for the well-being of Hindustan." Hafiz Rahmat Khan was also sounded through the helpful Ruhela envoy Ghulam Husain Khan, and Balwant Singh of Benares, who was sometimes harshly<sup>2</sup> treated in the past, was similarly humoured and requested to gather as big an army and as much of materials of war as his revenues could support, to secure authentic news of Qasim's doings and those of his confederates, and to ascertain "what attitude the courts of Allahabad and Faizabad are going to adopt towards him (Qasim)." Hindupati of Bundelkhand was told that the governor "has heard much of the Rajah's intellectual and moral qualities, and consequently it is certain that he will take adequate measures to defend his honour and country" against the Marathas who "are notorious for plundering people and breaking treaties."<sup>3</sup>

Shuja-ud-daulah had shortly before assured Cartier of his loyalty and friendship and earnestly requested him not to

February 1, 1770; Ben. Sel. Com. to Gailliez, January 28, 1770; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., February 16, 1770.

<sup>2</sup> More than once he was reprimanded by Verelst. Once his presents were refused and his vakil at Calcutta was turned back and he was asked to appoint another man. See C. P. C., II. 918, 919, 991, 1080, 1132 and 1301.

<sup>3</sup> C. P. C., III. 69, 73, 94-98.

listen to reports from interested persons, but to communicate to him directly, should any suspicion arise in his mind regarding his conduct and policy, so as to ascertain the truth. Harper, the English commander at the wazir's court, had also informed the governor that there was no reason to suspect Shuja's fidelity. The wazir appeared, he wrote to Cartier on February 1, 1770, to be content with his present position and tranquillity, and that he might think of opposing the English only if he were to compare his present state of dependence with the former one of independence ; but his inferiority in military strength must keep him quiet. He had further informed the governor that Mir Qasim's messenger had nothing to do with Shuja. But the select committee at its meeting held on February 16, resolved that Shuja was at the bottom of Qasim's movements and wrote to Harper that they did not agree with him that Shuja was contented and that Qasim's messenger had nothing to do with him. The committee opined that the king was weak and Shuja "is leading him astray." Accordingly Harper was directed to watch the wazir and to withdraw to Allahabad, if an invasion was likely to be made by the enemy. It is worthy of note that on that very day (February 16) Cartier, in a letter to Shuja-ud-daulah himself, charged Shah Alam "who," he wrote, "is particularly deficient in knowledge of the world," with carrying on treacherous negotiations with Mir Qasim, told the wazir that the court affairs were directed by some "arch villain" and requested him (Shuja) "to take such steps as may strengthen the alliance existing between His Majesty, the addressee and the English."<sup>4</sup>

Shuja was yet unaware of the English suspicion of his intentions and he informed Cartier that Qasim's "character and conduct are so detestable that none has joined him," and none treated with him except the Marathas who even laughed at this impoverished ex-ruler when he begged them for help with men and money. Poor and unable to pay his troops, he added, it can easily be seen "how little Mir Qasim

<sup>4</sup> C. P. C., III. 80, 81 ; Harper to Ben. Sel Com., February 1, 1770, Ben. Sel. Com. to Harper, February 16, 1770.

is to be feared and what condition he had been reduced to." The wazir then assured Cartier that despite his obvious weaknesses if Qasim ventured against Oudh and Allahabad, he was strong enough to give the invader a warm reception, and requested the governor that by way of precaution Barker should be directed to march to Patna and keep himself in readiness to proceed to his (Shuja's) assistance, should it be necessary for him to ask for<sup>5</sup> it.

But the English fears were not allayed and as they had imagined, undoubtedly wrongly, that a general confederacy of Qasim, Marathas, Sikhs, the emperor and Shuja had been formed against them they began to concert measures for the defence of Bihar and Bengal. The select committee resolved that all the boats belonging to Europeans must be examined at Kalpi as to the number of men, guns etc., in order to prevent soldiers and materials of war reaching the enemy country ; and as Gailliez had communicated his fears that Shuja might surprise the fort of Chunar and Allahabad and that Qasim might invade Allahabad, his request for permission to retain a sufficient quantity of arms, ammunitions, stores, and other necessities of war was granted. Other necessary preparations were quickly made.<sup>6</sup>

The fear from Qasim's so-called projected invasion being more imaginary than real, disappeared as suddenly as it had arisen. The ex-ruler of Bengal had not been able to enlist the sympathy, much less the support of any of the important Indian powers and he was not likely to succeed in forming a confederacy against the English. He was a fugitive without resources and his attempt, as Shuja had prophesied, ended in fiasco. Shitab Rai reported in the beginning of March that most of 15,000 troops that Qasim had assembled, deserted him, including his *bakhshi* Dan Shah Jat, as he was unable to pay their salaries. Balwant Singh had informed the governor a day before that owing to financial bankruptcy "all his (Qasim's) schemes have come to naught." The Bengal government's mind was now at ease and the select committee wrote

<sup>5</sup> C. P. C., III. 122.

<sup>6</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1770, pp. 71-100.



to Fort St. George that Qasim had no money and therefore all his chiefs deserted him, leaving him alone and destitute.

Although the English suspicion of Shah Alam was not altogether without foundation, it must be recorded in fairness to the emperor that he had received Mir Qasim's messenger not to enter into a confederacy against the English but to explore the possibilities of enlisting the co-operation of his master in his proposed expedition to Delhi on which he had firmly set his heart. But their suspicion of Shuja was unjust and baseless. It was inspired by the insinuations of Balwant Singh and the allegations of Najaf Khan (both partisans of the English and avowed enemies of the wazir), which were transmitted to Calcutta by Gailliez who too was to some extent influenced by anti-Shuja views at the court of Allahabad. It is noteworthy that these reports were contradicted not only by Shuja but also by Harper who was in a better position than Gailliez to know the character and movements of the wazir and who had at the time testified to his fidelity.<sup>8</sup>

The English policy of distrust and suspicion greatly embarrassed Shuja who was so definitely inferior to them in military strength and financial resources that all he could do was to plead his innocence and to write a mild letter of protest to the governor who had allowed himself to be misled by artful persons who wanted to break the bonds of friendship between him and the company. "In any case," urged the wazir, "friendship and prudence demand that should a designing person make insinuations, one should first of all see whether they are true or false. If false, it is one's duty to punish the author of those insinuations, in order that it may have a deterrent effect on others. Indeed, it would be better, if the governor made the writer acquainted with whatever information His Excellency might receive against him to enable him to clear himself of the false charges." Then in order to assure Cartier of the sincerity of his friendship, Shuja solemnly took an oath on the Quran in the presence of Harper,

<sup>7</sup>C. P. C., III. 128 and 129 ; Ben. Sel. Com. to Sel. Com. Fort St. George, March 13, 1770.

<sup>8</sup>C. P. C., III. 128 and p. XXV ; Robert Brooke to Gailliez, Feb. 10, 1770, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1770, pp. 90-92.

recorded the oath on the back of the holy book and forwarded it to Calcutta. The wazir declared that the allegations of the emperor's secret correspondence with Mir Qasim were false, and advised Cartier to be more attentive to the king, lest during the disturbed political situation he should throw himself into the hands of some other power. Harper too reported to the select committee that Shuja had assured him on oath by God, the Quran and his own son that he had done nothing against the English and was as firm in his friendship and fidelity as ever.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. Mirza Najaf Khan's dismissal from Kora.

Mirza Najaf Khan, one of the most staunch partisans of the English since 1764, had been appointed magistrate of Kora district in 1765 on Clive's recommendation and an annual sum of two lakhs of rupees out of twenty-six lakhs fixed as royal tribute from Bengal had been allotted to him in writing as a reward for the service he had rendered to the company in the late war against Shuja-ud-daulah. But though a valiant and successful soldier, Najaf possessed little skill in managing finances or supervising revenue administration, and he was accused of withholding the royal revenues and disobeying the imperial commands. His incompetence as a civil administrator coupled with the wazir's hostility for him led to his dismissal from Kora on February 21, 1770. Anxious to attract the governor's sympathy, Najaf wrote to Cartier that his dismissal was due to the wazir's intrigues and asked his advice whether he should stay there or move to another place. Cartier took personal interest in his case, advised him to stay at Allahabad, or come to Calcutta only if he found that his life was in danger owing to court intrigues, and requested Shah Alam more than once to show Najaf "a little consideration," as he "is an old and tried friend of the English *Sardars*," though he was aware, he added, that he had been charged with withholding the royal revenues and

<sup>9</sup> C. P. C., III. 131 ; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., March 5, 1770. Tr. of Shuja's protestation on the Quran, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1770, pp. 127-28.

disobedience of orders. To Shuja he wrote diplomatically that the court faction opposed to Najaf was responsible for his unjust dismissal and that had the wazir got knowledge of it in time, he would have without doubt prevented the perpetration of such injustice. "Even now it is not too late," concluded Cartier, "..... and he should ask His Majesty to treat the Khan leniently and not to disgrace him." He requested Shuja to protect Najaf for the gratification of the English.<sup>10</sup>

In compliance with instructions from Gailliez, Najaf arrived at Allahabad sometime in March, awaiting there the emperor's forgiveness. Meanwhile accountants having been nominated to scrutinise his papers the Khan was greatly disturbed and informed the governor that although he had never been guilty of embezzlement or disloyalty to the king, yet his enemies were protracting the examination of his accounts with a view to engineer a mutiny among his troops whose salaries to the amount of six lakhs of rupees were already in arrears. He appealed to Cartier to save him from ruin, for the only fault, he said, for which he had suffered this fate was his attachment to the company. Shah Alam, however, maintained that "Najaf Khan's dismissal is due to his misconduct. For four years he mismanaged the district of Kora ..... this year his misconduct became too flagrant to be overlooked. It appears that he has not paid the troops anything and that the country has been so much ruined by his oppression that next year it will produce half the usual revenue." Yet the emperor promised to treat Najaf well and the wazir had to agree to plead his cause before the king, "though his (Najaf's) conduct rather savoured of rebelliousness."<sup>11</sup>

The correspondence between Najaf and Cartier continued for some time, the former communicating the gradual development of the situation at the court and the governor advising him to "bow his head and try to regain His Majesty's favour slowly and gradually," or come to Bengal.

<sup>10</sup> C. P. C., III. 112, 113, 119, 126, 127 and 144.

<sup>11</sup> C. P. C., III. 164, 169, 170, 173, 174.

Although a balance of nine to ten lakhs of rupees was proved to be due from him, Shah Alam eventually forgave the Khan owing to Cartier's recommendation, deducting two and a half lakhs from his salary and remitting the remaining sum. But Najaf was not satisfied and he continued pressing for the governor's intercession, telling him that he was ruined and that the balance shown against him was due to the fabrication of the royal accountants. Accordingly Cartier further requested the king to "show the Khan further favour by paying the dues of his *risalah* from the royal treasury and not charging them to his account." The governor directed Gailliez to make a personal representation to the king to the above effect. The result was favourable. As Shah Alam himself was anxious to utilise the services of the valiant Khan during his intended expedition to Delhi, he listened to the governor's representation and his repeated reminders and exempted Najaf from the payment of the balance of three lakhs with the promise to pay the salary of his cavalry regiment in future from the royal treasury.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the fact that Shuja solemnly declared that he had no hand in Najaf's dismissal, the evidence in our possession leads us to the conclusion that it was as much due to the Khan's mismanagement as to the intrigues of the wazir who was known to be hostile to him since the days of Muhammad Quli Khan. It should, however, be noted that Shuja refrained from directly proposing the Khan's removal and had it done through Hisam-ud-daulah.<sup>13</sup> It is also worthy of note that the English policy of backing up their Indian partisans, who were either vassals or servants of the emperor or the wazir, such as Balwant Singh, Beni Bahadur, Najaf Khan, Munir-ud-daulah and others and protecting them from deserved or undeserved wrath of their legitimate masters, gradually undermined the prestige and power of these rulers,

<sup>12</sup> C. P. C., III. 185, 191, 194, 312, 315, 331, 332, 354, 393, 400, 404. There is a discrepancy of  $\frac{1}{2}$  lakh in the balance of the two accounts, one says 3 lakhs and another 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ .

<sup>13</sup> Gailliez to Ben. Sel. Com., February 15, 1770; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., March 5, 1770; C. P. C., III. 128; *Ghulam Ali* II. 257, *Mutakherin* 208.

while it strengthened the reputation and power of the company's representatives. It also eventually reduced Shah Alam to a cypher in the matter of appointment and dismissal of most of the high officers of his court. In practice no high imperial officer could continue to function for long, unless he enjoyed the support of the Calcutta authorities.

### 3. The Maratha Invasion ; Shu'a protests against the English policy of suspicion.

The so-called Mir Qasim menace to Bengal was closely connected with the Maratha advance into northern India ; but while the former had disappeared within two months, the latter continued to haunt the fear of the Fort William authorities for a much longer period. With a force estimated at 70,000 Ram Chandra Ganesh, Visaji Krishna, Tukoji Holkar and Mahadji Sindhia crossed the Chambal early in 1770 for re-establishing the Maratha rule in Hindustan, which had been swept away by the Abdali victory at Panipat in 1761. Penetrating into the Jat kingdom of Bharatpur, they inflicted a crushing defeat on Rajah Nawal Singh near Deeg on April 5-6, 1770, while Najib-ud-daulah at the same time set about to capture the Jat possessions in the mid-Doab in accordance with an agreement made with the invader. But the Marathas shrank from making an attempt to acquire the impregnable Jat fortress into which Nawal Singh now took shelter, and crossed the Jaumna near Mathura into the Doab, where they were joined by Najib and Imad-ul-mulk. The allies remained encamped in the Aligarh district, continuing fruitless negotiations for the realisation of a tribute from the Jats and the Ruhelas.<sup>14</sup>

Since their arrival in Hindustan the Marathas had made repeated overtures to Shah Alam, offering to conduct him to Delhi, and during their progress against the Jats they had requested him to move out of Allahabad, effect a junction with them and Jawan Bakht (who was to march to Agra at their request) and then proceed to Delhi and occupy his

<sup>14</sup> C. P. C., III. 180, 184 ; Sarkar : *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II. 406-414.



ancestral throne. As Najib's resignation of the stewardship of the capital in March, 1768 and the English policy of procrastination by putting off the day of the emperor's march on one excuse or another had greatly heightened Shah Alam's desire to tap other sources of help, he eagerly listened to Maratha overtures, and Shuja who had for some time been enjoying the royal confidence, assisted him in the delicate task of negotiating terms for an alliance with them. The wazir seems to have realised that Peshwa Madho Rao having triumphed over his domestic rivals the Maratha State had regained much of its strength and solidarity, and that Ahmad Shah's power being on the wane owing to his age, internal troubles, and the rapid growth of the Sikh power, a veritable counterblast to his ambitious projects, the repetition of Panipat of 1761 was altogether out of the bounds of possibility. He knew only too well that the English policy aimed at prolonging the emperor's stay at Allahabad and not fulfilling their promise of conducting him to Delhi and that the only other power capable of installing Shah Alam on his ancestral throne was that of the Marathas. With the example of his father and of Imad-ul-mulk before him the wazir must also have had the ambition of directing the affairs of the whole empire from the capital with Maratha backing instead of circumscribing it to the control of merely a fragment, namely Kora and Allahabad, of course, if it could be done without antagonising the English, which fear he had tried to obviate by not only assuring Cartier of the continuance of his friendship but also by inserting in his agreement with Shah Alam a clause to the effect that he would use his ascendancy over the king's mind in furthering the interests of the company. For these reasons Shuja heartily approved of the emperor's idea of seeking Maratha assistance and sent letters and robes of honour to the Deccani Chiefs who expressed their readiness to respond to the royal call. The wazir's letter to Shah Alam containing the information that the Maratha response was favourable was intercepted on April 8, by captain Brooke's clerk from the king's clerk who was bribed by the captain's men. Such a conduct of a responsible English officer at Allahabad, though in conformity with the general

policy of the Calcutta government in regard to the emperor and the wazir, filled Shuja with resentment, especially as the letter in question was not addressed to any of the Maratha chiefs but to the king, and it was not intercepted in transit from a *harkara* (courier) but was obtained from a clerk in the imperial office by means of bribery. On April 10, two days after the above incident, the wazir lodged a spirited protest and told Harper that in spite of the emperor's repeated summons he had thought it prudent not to go to Allahabad, as he was afraid lest the English should suspect his movement and lest there should be an open conflict between the English troops and Najaf's men on the one side and his own followers on the other.<sup>15</sup> Referring to the procuring of his letter from the king's clerk he said "that he was entirely ignorant of and unhappy to think that any part of his conduct had been such as to give occasions for these suspicions." In his report of the wazir's conversation Harper wrote to Calcutta that "He (Shuja) seemed much agitated during the most part of this discourse and the earnestness with which he argued the point drew from him an expression, which I imagine would not otherwise have escaped him. "It is," said he, "these suspicions to my prejudice and want of confidence in me notwithstanding my repeated professions of friendship, strengthened by the most binding oath, that will one day cause a quarrel betwixt the English and me. The earnest way to secure my friendship is to trust me with theirs and not to allow every report industriously spread by my enemies to have its weight in their opinion of me."<sup>16</sup>

On receipt of Harper's report Cartier attempted an explanation (in a letter to Shuja on April 28) of the Bengal government's attitude, if not conduct, in an unusual style, and while he omitted all reference to the wazir's conversation with Harper, he really answered Shuja's remarks made on April 10, when he wrote that the wazir "has nothing to

<sup>15</sup> Shuja's fear was due to the insolent behaviour of Gailliez who had publicly asked the wazir twice as to why he had come with his army to Allahabad, and who had arrested one of the wazir's *harkaras*. See C. P. C., III. 279, 280 and 298.

<sup>16</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., April 10, 1770; Gailliez to Ben. Sel. Com., April 9, 1770; S. P. D., Vol. XXIX. 257.

gain by exchanging the joys and comforts of peace for the cares and horrors of war and so long as the addressee and the English remain friends, they will not only be of help to one another but will also be feared by their enemies. But if, which God forbid, they cease to be friends, the consequences will be most serious." The governor, however, added that their friendship was based on treaties and common interests and was stable, and that he made the above observations, because the wazir "had hinted in one of his letters that the writer had lent too willing an ear to the stories of busy-bodies," and because after reviewing his own conduct and that of other English *sardars* he saw no reason why Shuja should have any reason to complain against them. He confessed that he had used strong language in regard to the dismissal of Najaf Khan and owing to the wazir's silence at a time when important negotiations were being conducted between various powers. Cartier concluded with the remark that as he had now given a candid explanation, "he believes that the addressee (Shuja) will be satisfied," and as far as he himself was concerned he had no misgivings in the wazir's sincerity of friendship, especially as the latter had proof of it by his recent oath on the Quran.<sup>17</sup>

The above explanation must have appeared insincere and unconvincing, and as a matter of fact it was intended to be a thinly veiled threat too. Such an impolitic policy was not likely to inspire real friendship and loyalty in the wazir and was therefore injurious to the best interests of the company. Happily it was set aside by Warren Hastings in 1772 in favour of one of reciprocal trust and understanding.

#### 4. The English dissuade the emperor from marching to Delhi.

During the above Maratha invasion the English followed a policy that was diametrically opposite to the one pursued by the emperor. While Shah Alam was negotiating with them for an alliance, the English were doing everything in their power to persuade him not to enter into any under-

<sup>17</sup> C. P. C., III. 188.

standing with them and to place every obstacle in his way. The Fort William authorities dreaded the Marathas and rightly looked upon them as the only Indian power capable of disturbing the peace of Bengal and thwarting the company's ambitious projects, commercial or political. The English policy, consistently pursued, was therefore one of alienating Shah Alam against them by painting the Maratha character in black colour, inciting prominent north Indian rulers, and if possible forming a confederacy, to oppose the further progress of the much-hated Deccanis. This policy is clearly unfolded in Cartier's numerous letters to Shah Alam, Shuja-ud-daulah and some other Indian chiefs and although they are highly interesting and instructive, it is beyond the scope of this book to notice them in detail, and all that can be done is to give here the barest outline of the outstanding points of their theme. It should be borne in mind that while he depended mainly on the strength and co-operation of the Maratha arms for the success of his undertaking, Shah Alam was eager to persuade the Bengal government to lend him some British troops who would be a more reliable bodyguard and a counterpoise against the Marathas in times of necessity. Accordingly he informed Cartier (April, 1770) of his intention to leave Allahabad and requested him to furnish four to five more battalions in addition to four promised by his predecessor in 1769, to accompany him to Delhi. But the governor strongly dissuaded him from going to fall into the hands of the Marathas whom he denounced as a "perfidious people" and as hereditary enemies of the house of Timur, and advised him to form, on the contrary, a confederacy of powerful chiefs in order to drive the invaders back to the Deccan.<sup>18</sup> When these arguments failed to shake the king's resolve, the governor reminded him that Imad-ud-mulk was his arch enemy and that the Maratha alliance with him was directed personally against Shah Alam.<sup>19</sup> Next the dangers likely to attend the proposed Delhi expedition, the innate Maratha treachery and the incompatibility of the Maratha interests and the Maratha religion to

<sup>18</sup> C. P. C., III. 190

<sup>19</sup> C. P. C., III. 195, 204.

the re-establishment of the empire were emphasised, but without convincing the emperor<sup>20</sup> who held fast to his resolve and diplomatically replied that he agreed with the governor's description of the Maratha character and was desirous of proceeding to Delhi to punish them.<sup>21</sup> Thereupon Cartier enquired of the strength of the king's resources and his allies and wrote that if he was going to Delhi to punish the Marathas, "His Majesty should know that he has set himself a formidable task ..... and although the Wazir will do his best to assist His Majesty, yet he cannot drive away the Marathas, strengthened as they have been by plundering the country of the Jats." But if he looked upon them as friends, "he is greatly mistaken, since they are notoriously fickle and untrustworthy." And therefore Cartier's advice was to "wait until the Maharattas have been weakened by the dissensions prevailing among them" and then form a confederacy of the north Indian rulers and drive them<sup>22</sup> out. The death of Najib-ud-daulah occurring meanwhile furnished one more pretext for inducing Shah Alam to postpone his departure, and Cartier wrote that the only guarantee of the safety of the imperial person having been removed by his death the emperor should not take a leap in the dark. Moreover the present time was inopportune, added the governor, for such a venture, when the Marathas and Imad were at the very gates of Etawah and Farrukhabad, threatening to devastate the empire. But despite much further correspondence and argumentation the king, who had fully made up his mind once for all, remained still unaffected.<sup>23</sup>

Early in January, 1771, the governor announced the despatch of an English army under Barker to the Karamnasa in order that it might have salutary effect on the king and the wazir. But while the emperor approved of it, he replied to Cartier that "The Maratha sardars are to all appearances as loyal and obedient to His Majesty's sacred mandates as ever. They have not yet turned their attention to the dependencies

<sup>20</sup> C.P.C., III. 314.

<sup>21</sup> C.P.C., III. 321.

<sup>22</sup> C.P.C., III. 329.

<sup>23</sup> C.P.C., III. 286, 321, 342, 370, 480, 508.



of the royal territory, nor does it appear to be their intention to do so in the near future."<sup>24</sup>

At the end of February 1771 when the preparations for the expedition had neared completion, the emperor once again urged Cartier to direct Barker to accompany him to Delhi with four battalions of troops and asked him if that was not the proper time to oppose the Marathas when they had occupied the royal palace and capital and taken the members of the imperial family into custody, when else would it ever come, as if Shah Alam's expedition to Delhi was really planned to oppose and fight the Marathas. The disappointed governor now made a final effort at persuading the emperor to postpone his march and complained that he had taken no notice of his numerous loyal representations "on the subject of the Marathas whose disloyalty, evil character, natural rapacity and falsehood are so well-known," and requested him not to join those who "take pleasure at His Majesty's distress" and warned him that "the object of their (Maratha's) pretended loyalty is to get him into their clutches in order to use his name to reach their own ends." But Shah Alam knew very well that the Marathas were not all evil, and that if they had many faults, they possessed some virtues also and could be relied upon when their interests were identical with those of the king. At any rate for him it meant the change of one set of masters (the English) for another (the Marathas) with the prospect of ruling over a larger territory and having a larger income and above all his ancestral palace, capital and throne, in his possession, and therefore he ignored Cartier's appeals and the importunities and threats of Barker, who had hastened to Allahabad for the purpose of preventing the emperor's departure, and set out on 9th April, 1771.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> C. P. C., III. 546, 564, and 593.

<sup>25</sup> C. P. C., III. 663, 684, 694, 686, 704. Barker threatened Shah Alam that if he persisted in his resolve to leave, all the company's troops at Allahabad would be withdrawn and no help would be given "in this ignoble cause." (See C. P. C., III. 686 and 704). But the emperor's desire to go to Delhi was so strong that he was reported to have said that he would commit suicide rather than be made to stay at Allahabad. (See C. P. C., III. 702 )

### 5. Shuja instigates the Marathas against the Ruhelas.

During the Maratha invasion Shuja-ud-daulah followed the policy of neutrality in the former's struggle, first with the Jats and then with the Ruhelas, although the English authorities in Bengal repeatedly urged him to take up the lead in forming a confederacy of prominent north Indian powers to drive the invaders back to the Deccan and failing that at least to march to the assistance of the Ruhelas so as to prevent the Maratha advance eastward. It is easily possible to trace with full accuracy the course of the wazir's policy during the year (April 1770-April 1771) from the Maratha advent to the emperor's departure for Delhi from the numerous letters of Harper and Gailliez to the Bengal select committee reporting the nawab wazir's hopes and fears, plans and movements from day to day, when supplemented by his own correspondence with Cartier and the reports of Shitab Rai to the Fort William authorities in Calcutta. During this fateful period Shuja kept three things in view, namely, maintaining friendly relations with the Marathas without alienating or betraying his allies the English, retaining his neutrality in the Maratha war with the Jats and the Ruhelas and instigating the invaders against the Ruhelas so as to weaken the latter and make the future subjugation of Ruhelkhand an easy task for his arms. By clever diplomacy he successfully endeavoured to keep the English off his scent for some time; but though Harper and Gailliez very soon discovered the main object of the wazir's policy still the English failed to make him take up the Ruhela cause and march to their aid against the Marathas.

About the middle of April 1770, when the Marathas were crossing into the Doab, Shuja offered to march to the frontier of Kora on the border of the Bangash territory to make a demonstration against them and to check the growing power of the Maratha ally Najib-ud-daulah under whose guardianship Jawan Bakht was reported to be proceeding to Agra to join the Maratha army. He displayed his eagerness so much that he told Harper that he was prevented from setting out owing to his ignorance of the committee's attitude towards the proposed step. But as a matter of fact he was not at this

time in the least desirous of proceeding to Kora and his ignorance of the Bengal government's views was a mere pretext for postponing his start. He was in correspondence with the Marathas and had sent his trusted agent Trimbak Das to their camp for negotiations. On May 1, he only despatched a battalion of his troops to Cawnpore, then a small village granted to him by the king for building a frontier fortress, and himself set out from Faizabad on May 10, on what turned out to be a twenty-five day hunting expedition, undoubtedly to conceal the divergence between his professions and conduct. He returned the next day (11th May) but again left the same evening, marching towards Bahraich with his wife and some other ladies, but leaving at Faizabad his mother and all his sons except the eldest and most of his troops except those who accompanied him on the trip. During this unusual expedition in an unusual season (May-June) Shuja visited Bahramghat, Balrampur and Bahraich and went further shooting in the jungle 18 miles north of the last named town. Thus he continued his policy of procrastination till the rains set in and made military operations impossible. On his return to Lucknow from his hunting expedition on 3rd June, he told Harper that the Marathas were not likely to attempt further conquests owing to internal dissensions among them and the near approach of the rainy season and hence there was no use marching to Kora. Accompanied by Harper he now marched to Cawnpore and thence to Faizabad *via* Lucknow, leaving at the first named place a battalion of sepoys with some guns to fortify it and to watch the Maratha movements. The Marathas had already cantoned themselves at Aligarh, and heavy rain during the first four days of July caused suspension of all military and diplomatic activities. By his diplomacy the wazir thus succeeded in avoiding giving an umbrage to the Marathas for more than six months.<sup>26</sup>

The English policy throughout this period was not to send any part of their army beyond Kora, but to persuade the wazir to march to the assistance of the Ruhelas and better still

<sup>26</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., April 16, May 14, 19, 26, June 3, 16, and July 4, 1770; *Harcharan*, 502b; S. P. D., XXIX. 257, 261 and 262.

to take up the lead in organising a coalition of prominent powers against the invader, and therefore the Bengal select committee gladly approved of Shuja's proposal of his marching to Kora at its meeting on 3rd May and permitted Harper to join him with his battalion. Cartier tickled the wazir's vanity by referring to his "heroic deeds" and ascribing to him a great share in the Abdali victory at Panipat in 1761, and thus urged him to action against the Marathas. "All eyes are at this moment turned towards the addressee," he wrote to Shuja, "and Hindustan hopes that he will not let her children be food for the swords of the haughty Marathas, and thinks that he alone can hold the balance between them and the rest of the Empire." The governor encouraged the wazir by informing him of the despatch of two English battalions under Barker to Buxar to be in readiness there to march to his assistance in case of necessity. But Shuja clearly realised the implications and dangers of the policy of assuming a leading role against the Marathas and as he knew that the English themselves were averse to taking offensive measures and would fight the invader only in defence of their own territory or those of their allies, the emperor and the wazir, and that too in the guise of auxiliaries to him or to the king and not as principals, he wisely adopted the policy of not antagonising the Marathas, and replied to Cartier that "The truth is that there is no one left in Hindustan to stop the career of the Marathas. For his own part the writer (Shuja) is ready to defend the dominions of His Majesty and those of himself." He frankly advised the governor to take up the offensive against the invader, if he desired the various anti-Maratha powers to make a common cause against the Deccanis. "If it is His Excellency's opinion," remarked the wazir, "that the Marathas should be driven from Hindustan, he should appoint a large army under the command of an officer of distinction to attend the royal stirrup." Obviously the Calcutta government was not prepared to undertake such a bold step, and therefore Shuja continued his policy of procrastination till the rainy season set in and made movements of armies impossible.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., May 3, 1770; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., June 16 and July 4, 1770; C.P.C., III. 196, 250

Cartier, however, all this time continued his exhortations and even mildly accused the wazir of short-sightedness in not providing assistance to Ruhelkhand the enslavement of which by the Marathas, he said, must be looked upon as a signal of danger to Oudh. The governor impressed upon Shuja that "your grand object at present should be the reduction of the Marathas," and requested him to base his policy on three fundamental points, namely, the separation of Najib from the Marathas, the encouragement and assistance to the Ruhelas, and effecting unity among the Jats. But these exhortations did not much influence the wazir who continued his policy of temporising during the rains, now declaring that he would go to help the Ruhelas, now writing that no alliance with the Ruhelas was possible without the king's participation, and at other times that measures should be taken to prevent the king's throwing himself into Maratha hands. After the rainy season he frankly wrote to Cartier that willing though he was for the sake of the country and Muslim religion to help the Ruhelas, yet he was afraid that their united forces "cannot effect much unless they were supported by the English." He enquired of the governor whether he was sending troops to co-operate with him. "If he is (sending)," wrote he, "the writer will be glad to help the Rohillas, if not he will have only his own safety to provide for."<sup>28</sup>

There was a slight change in Shuja's attitude towards the Marathas when Najib's death on 31st October made him apprehensive of an alliance between them and Imad who had for some time been intriguing for regaining his former position of wazirship that he had once held with Maratha backing. Now he felt inclined to go to the assistance of the Ruhelas, recalled his wakil from the Maratha camp and dismissed the Maratha envoys. The preliminaries for a treaty were discussed with Hafiz Rahmat's wakil through the exertion of Harper, and it was settled that Hafiz should pay the expenses of Shuja's troops. The wazir was afraid that Imad might proclaim Jawan Bakht as king and himself might establish as

<sup>28</sup> C.P.C., III. 263, 350, 413; Ben Sel. Com. Progs., August 11, 1770; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., July 15 & 30. August 27, 1770; Shuja to Cartier, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1770, pp. 574-76.



wazir and so he urged upon Cartier the necessity of an immediate action against the confederates. The select committee approved of the wazir's proposal on 7th November and resolved upon sending some troops under Barker to co-operate with Shuja. But, while the nawab despatched a battalion of sepoys to reinforce his newly established garrison at Cawnpore, he postponed proceeding to Kora until Barker's arrival and his meeting with him, and probably because he felt that the Marathas were not likely to support Imad's pretensions, he once more impressed upon Harper that he would not go to Ruhela help until he was joined and assisted by English troops.<sup>29</sup>

Shuja-ud-daulah's conduct during this period appeared mysterious to the English authorities in Bengal who wrote to Fort St. George that the wazir's views seemed inexplicable, as one day he would be resolved on vigorous measures and would declare that he was ready to march and the very next day he would bring in a frivolous excuse. Harper rightly believed that Shuja had not entered into any treaty or engagement with the Marathas, but his policy was calculated to put off his march to Kora, as he was interested in the destruction of the Ruhela power. "I think it probable," wrote Harper to Cartier, "that he (Shuja) is urging the Marathas to this enterprise (invasion of Ruhelkhand) by every means in his power....." Gailliez too believed that "If he (Shuja) has entered into any engagement with them (the Marathas), it is now supposed to be with a view of attacking the Rohillas." Despite their knowledge of the wazir's policy, the English thought it impolitic, in view of critical times, to call an explanation from him.<sup>30</sup>

#### 6. The installation of Rajah Chait Singh, October, 1770.

While the Maratha danger was still threatening Ruhelkhand and Balwant Singh, the sagacious and successful ruler of Benares, died during the night of 23rd August, 1770, after a

<sup>29</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., Oct. 24, and Dec. 1, 1770; C.P.C., III. 473; *Harcharan*, 503a.

<sup>30</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Sel. Com. Fort St. George, June 9, 1770; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., May 19, 26, 1770; Gailliez to Ben. Sel. Com.,

brief illness, leaving his son Chait Singh, a youth of about 17 years of handsome features and engaging manners, whom he had nominated as his successor during his lifetime, in the possession of the State. The deceased having been a protege of the English, Cartier was interested in the confirmation of Chait Singh in his father's place and recommended him to the nawab-wazir even before he had received a report from Chait Singh regarding Balwant Singh's illness and death. Like his father Safdar Jang, Shuja had always sought, though without success, to reduce Balwant and chastise him for his insubordination and direct alliance with the English, and now he welcomed the opportunity of imposing on Chait Singh stricter terms and a higher annual tribute, besides customary succession fee, and expressed his unwillingness to grant him the same authority as was enjoyed by the deceased. But he was afraid of English intervention and therefore requested Harper to ascertain the select committee's sentiments on the matter, obviously because he had not yet received Cartier's letter recommending Chait Singh. He had already despatched his chief minister Elich Khan to Benares where the latter stayed for one month, negotiating with the rajah's agents but no settlement was made till Shuja had deputed Harper to expedite the conclusion of an agreement. Now a conference was held between Harper, Elich Khan, Chait Singh and his agents. The wazir had been demanding a *nazar* of twenty lakhs and an increase of five lakhs in the yearly tribute, while Chait Singh offered to pay a *peshkash* or *nazranah* of ten lakhs. The difficulties of the conference were further aggravated by the fact that Chait was Balwant's son by a Rajput lady and his right to succession was disputed by two more claimants, one a nephew and the other a grandson of the deceased rajah. As the results of delicate negotiations, however, in which Harper took a prominent part, it was finally settled on 8th October, that Chait Singh should pay a *nazranah* of seventeen lakhs, besides two and a half lakhs of increase in the annual revenue. Of the seventeen lakhs, ten were to be paid

June 15, 1770. On 24th September Gailliez wrote, of course, wrongly that the king told him that Shuja had promised Marathas 80 lakhs, if they put him in possession of Ruhelkhand, Kora and Allahabad.

immediately and the remaining seven in twelve months. Chait Singh was now installed as Rajah on 10th October, with the same rights and privileges as were enjoyed by Balwant, and on behalf of the wazir were bestowed upon him the customary robes of investiture, elephants and some other articles. The installation ceremony was attended by Harper.<sup>31</sup>

### 7. Asaf-ud-daulah's marriage, November, 1770.

Within a month of the Benares settlement to the wazir's satisfaction was celebrated the wedding of his eldest son Asaf-ud-daulah, *alias* Mirza Amani. The daughter of Siraj-ud-daulah of Bengal was marked out for the young Mirza, but owing to political misfortune that befell the Murshidabad ruling family in 1757, that marriage was now out of question. The prince was therefore betrothed to Shams-un-nisa, daughter of the deceased Turani wazir Intizam-ud-daulah and grand-daughter of Qamar-ud-din Khan, prime minister of Muhammad Shah, and the bride's family headed by the dowager Sholapuri Begam (widow of Qamar-ud-din) migrated from Delhi (October 12, 1769) where they had lived in comparative neglect and poverty consequent on the decline of the imperial capital and the passing of power into the hands of Najib, to Faizabad where they arrived in November 1769 and were received with all consideration and pomp suitable to their rank. A suitable subsistence allowance was allotted to the family, and it was decided that the marriage would take place later at an auspicious time.<sup>32</sup>

As the date approached near, elaborate arrangements were made to celebrate it in a befitting manner. On 6th November 1770 *sachaq* was sent to the house of Sholapuri Begam in a grand procession composed of gorgeously dressed officers

<sup>31</sup> C.P.C., III. 346, 350, 424, 425, 433, 452; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., August 25, Sept. 4, Oct. 4, 8, 1770; *Harcharan* 503a; *Balwant*, 123. The last named work confuses Shuja's visit to Benares in Feb. 1771 with this incident, although he did not visit Benares in Oct. 1770. It is wrong in supposing that Chait Singh met him and offered to become a Muslim (p. 121). *Harcharan* says that Chait Singh was made to pay four lakhs to the emperor and one lakh was given to Harper and Elich Khan.

<sup>32</sup> *Harcharan*, 501b; *Imad*, 104; *D.C.*, 227. Mirza Amani's betrothal with Siraj's daughter does not seem to have taken place.

and well-accountred and well-mounted troops, besides a concourse of public, with numerous valuable articles displayed for the public gaze, notable among which were five thousand vessels, many of them being made of silver, and many thousand trays full of sweets, bottles of perfumes, costly wearing apparel and jewels and ornaments. On the 9th *mahdi* came from the bride's house to that of the bridegroom, and on the 10th the bridegroom, then aged twenty, and party with all the pomp and display known to the 18th century Indian nobility marched to the bride's residence and the marriage was performed with due solemnities. The bride entered into the nawab's palace on the 12th amidst showers of silver coins that were thrown across her palanquin to the beggars down below. It is said that Shuja spent twenty four lakhs of rupees on this happy occasion.<sup>33</sup>

The marriage was significant inasmuch as it united two rival noble families that had contended for supremacy in the Mughal empire for three generations since the time of Saadat Khan and his contemporary Muhammad Amin Khan. Although no longer politically important, Qamar-ud-din's progeny still enjoyed a very high social status and commanded esteem among the country's nobility, and one branch of the parent family still ruled over an extensive dominion with its capital at Hyderabad. It is noteworthy that the bride's ancestors originally came from Central Asia, were Turani Mughals by descent and orthodox Sunnis by religion, while the bridegroom's grandfather and great-grandfather were Persian Shiahhs, permanently settled in Oudh. The union, however, proved unhappy. As a matter of fact it was no real union, for the consummation of the marriage never took place, and Asaf-ud-daulah being addicted to unnatural practices never exhibited love for his wife's company.<sup>34</sup>

#### 8. Shuja's conference with Barker at Benares, February, 1771.

Despite Shuja's insistence that he would not proceed to Ruhela assistance without the English collaboration in the

<sup>33</sup> *Harcharan*, 502b-503a ; *Imad*, 104 ; *T. Farah Bakhsh*, II. 18. *Imad's* date is wrong.

<sup>34</sup> *T. Farah Bakhsh*, II. 18.

enterprise, Cartier did not give up his endeavour to persuade him to move his troops to Kora, promising that if this demonstration did not check the Marathas from carrying out their hostile designs, "His Excellency's allies, the English *sardars* are at hand to assist" (him). "His Excellency has nothing to apprehend from the Rohillas," added the governor, "as they are divided under different heads and probably by diverse interests. The nation to be dreaded is the Marathas, if they can once establish themselves on the frontier of His Excellency's country ; but they can do this only by weakening or rather exterminating both the Jats and the Rohillas." Hence in his own interest, continued Cartier, Shuja should enter into a defensive and offensive alliance with the latter powers and take the lead in defending Hindustan from the grasping invaders. But again the English proposal did not meet with the wazir's acceptance, as he considered his policy of neutrality wiser, and the course of future events showed he was certainly right. He diplomatically wrote to the governor that he had delayed taking action for so long, as he had been expecting the advice of his friend, the governor." "Moreover," he added, "General Barker is tarrying still, while the Marathas are ravaging the lands adjacent to those of His Majesty and the writer." Then the wazir for the first time clearly enunciated his policy towards the Marathas in these words. "If the Marathas continue to preserve the path of friendship and remain firm and immovable in their obedience to His Majesty and in their attachment to the English *sardars* and the writer, he will neither have any business with them, nor call them to account, but will be neutral and remain in his own land. But if the Marathas deviate from the path of obedience to His Majesty and of attachment to His Excellency and the writer, and are guilty of hostilities and disturbances, he is equally prepared to oppose them in defending his own territory and that of His Majesty." After this exposition the wazir enquired of Cartier whether in accordance with his promise he was despatching a force to co-operate with him.<sup>35</sup>



Shuja-ud-daulah does not seem to have been quite sanguine about British help reaching him in time, and his suspicion was not altogether without foundation. On third May, 1770 the Bengal select committee, had resolved to send a force under Barker to the Karamnasa and the same day had announced its despatch ; but this force tarried near Patna for months, and did not reach the Karamnasa till after the end of the first week of February, 1771, although during the intervening months the Marathas had swarmed in Ruhelkhand, captured many Pathan parganahs including Etawah (12th December, 1770) and threatened the district of Kora under Shah Alam. The English too were suspicious of Shuja and feared that he might call a conference of the Maratha chiefs and form an alliance with them ; but this suspicion was without foundation, though the wazir had his wakil in the Maratha camp and was in correspondence with them. He was further suspected of having some designs on Bengal, as he had established regular communication between Calcutta and Faizabad and was corresponding with Nand Kumar. But in view of critical times through which the country was passing the Fort William authorities maintained a discreet silence and did not call the wazir to account.<sup>36</sup> It was, principally because of the Bengal government's anxiety to prevent Shuja from forming an alliance with the Marathas and not so much because of the Maratha danger to Kora that Barker was at last authorised on 17th January to cross the Karamnasa.<sup>37</sup> The wazir now wrote to the general to give him a meeting either at Faizabad or at Benares, as he had to discuss with him several urgent questions. Barker agreed to see him at Benares, promising to leave Buxar<sup>38</sup> on February 4, 1771.

Leaving Buxar on 9th February, Barker reached Benares on the 11th, where he was met by Shuja who had arrived

<sup>36</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., Dec. 16, 1770 ; Cartier's minute, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., January 16, 1771 ; Ben. Sel. Com. to Barker, Jan. 17, 1771.

<sup>37</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Barker, January 17, 1771.

<sup>38</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., January 26, 1771 ; C. P. C., III. 581.

there two days earlier, having started from Faizabad on February 1. Munir and Elich Khan came from Allahabad, and a conference was held on the 11th. Shuja had revised his policy towards the Marathas owing to the changed political situation. Having evacuated Ruhelkhand the invader was on his march towards Delhi with the object of obtaining possession of the imperial capital and fort, and Shah Alam, being despaired of help from his wazir and the English, was reported to have instigated the Marathas to adopt the above measures and definitely entered into an agreement with them, promising to leave the English protection at Allahabad for the imperial capital as soon as preparations for the journey were completed. The wazir was now on the horns of a dilemma. If Shah Alam proceeded to Delhi, the administration of the empire was sure to pass into Maratha hands, who might appoint somebody else as wazir, while if the king stayed at Allahabad in violation of his agreement with the Marathas, the latter might raise another prince to the throne and invade Ruhelkhand, Allahabad and Oudh. Anyway the situation seemed to be fraught with evil possibilities, and hence he convened the conference to devise ways and means to avert the dangerous possibilities.<sup>39</sup>

The conference resolved that the wazir should personally meet the Ruhela chiefs, notably Hafiz Rahmat and discuss with him terms of an alliance against the Marathas. Two important results were confidently expected from the proposed alliance ; firstly, it would prevent the Marathas from marching against the territories of the contracting parties and secondly, owing to the accession of strength that would accrue to the allies, neither the emperor would of his own accord join the Marathas, nor could the latter dare seize him for their own ends.<sup>40</sup> Shuja proposed that he, the English and the Ruhelas should undertake a joint expedition to Delhi to drive the Marathas from there and instal Shah Alam in the

<sup>39</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 12, 1771; C. P. C., III. 610, 625, 630, 694.

<sup>40</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., March 20, 1771 ; C. P. C., III. 658.

imperial capital. As an earnest of his intentions, he promised help to Zabita Khan against the Marathas and offered the latter five lakhs of rupees, if they evacuated Delhi and handed it over to Zabita Khan. These measures were taken to prevent the king from going without assistance from the wazir and the English to join the Marathas, as he believed that Shah Alam would not proceed to Delhi under the circumstances if the capital were not in Maratha hands. But the Bengal government approved of the wazir's first proposal only, namely, an alliance with the Ruhelas for internal security and defence and disapproved the proposal of a march to Delhi and resolved to discourage him from attempting it. It is also worthy of note that even at this stage when the wazir was in agreement with their policy of opposing the Maratha advance, the English were reluctant to assume direct responsibility of hostilities against the Marathas and consequently the alliance was to be concluded between Shuja and the Ruhelas with the approval of the English and not between the wazir, the Ruhelas and the English.

In pursuance of the decision of the conference, Shuja left Benares on 21st February, marched towards Kora and encamped at Mahdighat on the Ganges, sending a trusted agent ahead to Hafiz to arrange for a personal conference with him.<sup>41</sup> But as the Marathas had evacuated Ruhelkhand and Hafiz felt himself secure, he not only refused to enter into an alliance or friendship with the wazir, but did not have the courtesy of even agreeing to meet him. The Ruhela chief preferred an alliance with Zabita Khan from whom he expected money, while an alliance with the wazir meant

<sup>41</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 24, 1771.

Shuja stayed at Benares for 10 days. He was received at Phulpur on Feb. 8, by Chait Singh on whom the wazir bestowed a *khilaat*, a *serpech* and a sword. A *jagir* was also granted to him. Being free from the conference, he honoured Chait Singh with a visit to his capital Ramnagar on 20th Feb. when the rajah presented him cash, elephants, horses, jewels and rare cloth. The wazir fastened his own turban on Chait Singh's head and conferred on him a sword at the time of departure. (see C. P. C., III. 639, 644 and 647).

another war with the Marathas for which he was not prepared, as he considered his dominion safe, at least for some time. "The conduct of the Rohillas," writes Harper to Bengal select committee, "has given a sensible shock to the vizier's pride.....". With wounded feelings Shuja turned back from Mahdighat and set out for Lucknow on 26th March, abandoning his idea of an alliance with the Ruhelas and also of his project of fortifying Cawnpore and building a fort there.<sup>42</sup> From Lucknow he returned to Faizabad. The resolution of the Benares conference became a mere scrap of paper.

### 9. Shuja's attitude towards the Delhi expedition.

During the early stages of the emperor's negotiations with the Marathas Shuja-ud-daulah was in favour of an alliance with them and supported the imperial proposal of a march to Delhi. But for fear of offending the English, who were opposed to the scheme, he did not take a prominent part in the counsels of the pro-Delhi party at the court and diplomatically advised Cartier to be more favourable to the king at that critical juncture lest he should throw himself into the hands of some neighbouring power. But as the wazir did not succeed in avoiding suspicion by the Calcutta authorities, he very soon revised his attitude towards the royal project and wrote to Cartier, "If a considerable English force accompanies His Majesty to the capital the writer will also join the expedition, if not, he will stay where he is.....". About the same time the wazir assured Harper too that he would do nothing to help the emperor without the English consent.<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile Shah Alam received urgent letters from his mother and from Najib urging him to return to Delhi immediately and therefore he called upon the wazir to get

<sup>42</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., March 19, 26 and April 3, 1771; C. P. C., III, 759.

<sup>43</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., March 5, and June 8, 1770; C.P.C., III, 193, 250.

ready to accompany him after the rains. Shuja-ud-daulah expressed his readiness to join the king with his army and artillery, but requested him first of all to settle the plan in consultation with the English, and at the same time asked Cartier's advice as to what he should do under the circumstances. Realising that Shuja would not undertake to assist him without Cartier's approval, Shah Alam, while requesting the governor to furnish him with four to five battalions of troops, asked him to induce the wazir to join the expedition. In view of the pronounced English policy, Cartier indirectly dissuaded Shuja from sending the emperor help or going to accompany him and appreciated his frankness, adding that he himself was "unwilling to send His Majesty the promised two battalions, much less the four or five battalions, which he now asks for." Hereafter the wazir's policy of holding himself aloof from his sovereign remained constant, despite Shah Alam's repeated attempts to prevail upon him to join hands in his march to the imperial capital.<sup>44</sup>

#### 10. Shuja conducts the emperor as far as Jajmau.

The emperor was not slow in appreciating the situation and in understanding the attitude and policy of the English and the wazir; but he continued his correspondence with both seeking their co-operation in the enterprise, till Saif-uddin Muhammad's mission to the Marathas had been crowned with success, resulting in an agreement between them. The Marathas undertook to instal Shah Alam and to put him in possession of the imperial capital and the adjoining districts, then held by Zabita Khan, and the emperor bound himself to pay them twenty-five lakhs of rupees, out of which ten lakhs were to be paid within eight days of the delivery of the fort and the remaining immediately on the emperor's arrival at Delhi. The Marathas were to be given Meerut and some other districts in that vicinity and they were empowered to make all appointments except that of the wazir and to share

<sup>44</sup> C.P.C., III. 286-289, 319, 321, 330.



the *peshkash* (offering from vassals) equally with the Mughal sovereign. Now Shah Alam announced that he would begin his march on April 13, (27th Zil Hijjah), but as he feared that the English and the wazir might prevent his start, he sent out his advance tents on the 5th and himself left Allahabad at 1 o'clock in the afternoon of 9th April, four days before the appointed date, entered a bungalow called Jahan-Nauma outside the city, and thence commenced his journey on the 13th. At Sarai Alam Chand, 18 miles from Allahabad, he halted for some days in order to allow Shuja, who was on his way from Faizabad, to meet him there.<sup>45</sup>

Although not at heart against the emperor's expedition Shuja wrote to Shah Alam for a reconsideration of his decision, as he did not desire to offend the English who wanted him to exert, in conjunction with them, in that direction, "otherwise the king will slip out of their hands and it will hardly be possible to get him back again.....". But it must be said to the credit of the English that when Shuja proposed, no doubt to please the Fort William authorities, that some restraint should be imposed on Shah Alam's proceedings with the Marathas, the select committee refused to approve of the measure, for their policy was to use persuasion and not force in their endeavour to prolong the emperor's stay at Allahabad. As regards joining the Delhi expedition for which the king had been pressing him or staying at home which policy was dictated by his self-interest and prudence and friendship for the English, Shuja was between the devil and the deep sea. As wazir it was clearly his duty not only to accord his hearty assistance to the emperor but also to attend the expedition in person ; and he had pledged both in his recent agreement (April 1769). But he deliberately chose to refrain from accompanying Shah Alam and also did not allow his son Saadat Ali Khan to attend the emperor on the march. In order to bid Shah Alam good-bye Shuja started from Faizabad on 14th April and as the anniversary of the death of the

<sup>45</sup> C.P.C., III. 695, 717, 720; *Khair-ud-din* (p. 193) says that he started on 11th April (25th Zil Hijjah).

Prophet's grandson Husain was about to begin, he took with him all the paraphernalia necessary for the observance of *tazias* and during the first ten days of Muharram (15th to 24th April) travelled by day, himself and his followers clad in black and green robes and observed mourning rites by night. He crossed the Ganges at Dalmau and interviewed the emperor on April 30, at Sarai Alam Chand. Before his arrival people in the imperial camp had expected that he would counsel return to Allahabad, but when the emperor held consultation with him, Shuja said nothing except professing obedience to the imperial commands. In compliance with Shah Alam's desire, he furnished him with a loan of twelve lakhs of rupees in cash and supplied him with one hundred transport carts, more than a hundred camels, some elephants, horses, tents and some other articles. Besides these the wazir presented 250 muskets and nominated Himmat Bahadur with 5000 horse, 5000 foot and five piece of cannon to conduct the emperor to Delhi.<sup>46</sup> The emperor was pleased to appoint the wazir governor of the districts of Allahabad and Kora and to bestow on him the fort of Allahabad on 2nd May, while Munir, who out of the deference for the English, did not like to accompany the king to Delhi, was the same day appointed the wazir's deputy in Allahabad and Kora and given leave of return. The wazir followed the emperor as far as Jajmau, 2 miles south of Cawnpore, and from there took leave of him on 3rd June to return with his son Saadat Ali Khan to Allahabad *en route* to Faizabad, while Barker bade Shah Alam good-bye at Bithur on the Ganges, 12 miles north-west of Cawnpore, on 28th June, leaving two battalions of sepoys and four field pieces to accompany the emperor.<sup>47</sup> After months' journey the

<sup>46</sup> Himmat Bahadur & Elich Khan took leave of the king on 25th November, 1771 and returned to Faizabad. C.P.C., III 998.

<sup>47</sup> C. P. C., III. 658-810 specially, 658, 746, 747, 798, 810; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., April 13, 19, 1771; Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., April 20, May 4, 1771; Harcharan 505b; *Khair-ud-din*, 194; *Ghulam Akh*, II.

latter entered the imperial capital on 6th January, 1772.

269 ; *Siyar*, 930-31 ; *Imad*, 104, S.P.D., XXIX. 267 and 269. Shuja, however, wrote to Cartier that he advised the emperor to return to Allahabad. (see C. P. C., III. 798). For Barker's leaving two battalions with the king see, C.P.C., III. 836 and 851. These seemed to have returned before reaching Delhi. When he was despaired of his ability to detain the king, Barker unsuccessfully endeavoured to persuade Shah Alam to leave behind at Allahabad his two sons practically as hostages (C.P.C., III. 698 and 702, 760). He advised Shuja not to allow his son Saadat Ali Khan to accompany the emperor to Delhi. (C.P.C., III. 706), and incited Zabita Khan against the Marathas (C.P.C., III. 759).

*Siyar*, pp. 930-31 wrongly thinks that Shuja stayed on with the emperor sometime longer and negotiated for the settlement of *peshkash* from Muzaffar Jung, son of Ahmad Khan Bangash.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE PROBLEMS AND POLICY AFTER THE EMPEROR'S DEPARTURE

#### 1. Shuja back at Faizabad.

Having seen the emperor off, Shuja returned to Cawnpore and thence proceeded to Lucknow on 4th June, leaving most of his troops at the former town. Harper joined him at Lucknow, where Trimbak Das, the wazir's wakil at the Maratha camp, also arrived and had an interview with his master. The party then returned to Faizabad, reaching there on the 15th. Shuja's long absence from his capital and the reports that he was accompanying the emperor to Delhi had encouraged some bold and powerful spirits in Oudh to think of rebellion. Some of the taluqdars and big zamindars in the northern and southern districts with-held government revenue, fortified their fortresses and made other preparations to defend themselves. At this juncture news flashed across the *subah* that the wazir was back and this frustrated the designs of rebellious chiefs. "The sudden arrival of the army at this place" (Faizabad), reported Harper to the English authorities in Bengal, "has put a final stop to these rebellious proceedings and everything is again tranquillity."<sup>1</sup>

After his return from Jajmau Shuja-ud-daulah allowed himself to be overcome by the temptations of the harem and for a time he became addicted to sloth and debauchery to the neglect of the daily work of administration that was left to drift its own course. Confusion began to find its way into the business of the State and Harper wrote to the select committee that "He (Shuja) is lately so much addicted to dissipation and his *zanana* (seraglio) that no business whatever is transacted, and this has introduced many abuses into

<sup>1</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., June 18, 1771.

the management of his affairs, the ill consequences of which he will probably soon feel." During the previous two years when a devastating famine had been sweeping over Bengal from one corner to the other Shuja had supplied at Cartier's request a large amount of grain to the Bengal government, agreeing to accept its price after much English insistence and the refusal of the governor to take the grain *gratis*. Harper found it very difficult to have an audience with the voluptuous wazir, who would not spare any time from his degrading hobbies, and to request him to nominate an officer to ascertain and fix the price of the grain supplied.<sup>2</sup> But fortunately Shuja soon recovered himself, as since his defeat at the hands of the English he had become conscious of the weight of his responsibilities and had reduced the periods of his sensual activity, which now came to him like temporary fits that passed away after a few days leaving him sober and repentant. It is clear that in the present case he shook off his lethargy before it was too late and gave his full attention to some of the momentous problems that were awaiting solution.

## 2. How Barker acquired the Allahabad fort for the English, 1772.

One of the urgent problems before the wazir was how to regain possession of the Allahabad fort. It has been mentioned that at the time of bidding him good-bye at Jajmau, the emperor conferred this fort upon Shuja, and as it was then used as a place of residence for the British troops stationed there, Shah Alam wrote to Cartier, directing him to make it over to the wazir. But although the Fort William government and their agent (Barker) with the king, made a show of their willingness to comply, they were in fact reluctant to part with such a valuable possession. Accordingly Barker wrote to Shah Alam that despite his declaration that he had given the fort to Shuja it "appeared from subsequent

<sup>2</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., 23rd September, 1771.



words of His Majesty that he was not in favour of delivering the fort to the Wazir," and enquired whether he really desired so ; "if not, he (Barker) will keep it in his possession and guard it." He added that the Bengal committee was willing to comply with the imperial orders, "if His Majesty desires the English to withdraw their protection completely from Allahabad and Kora and have nothing to do with them. But if His Majesty desires them to continue to guard those districts, they require a place for keeping the garrison and war material. For this the fort is the only suitable place in the whole of Allahabad and Kora." Hence Barker requested that the English be allowed to retain the fort in their possession.<sup>3</sup>

Within a fortnight Barker learnt that Shuja was preparing to despatch four battalions of troops under Saadat Ali Khan to occupy the fort and therefore he requested the emperor to expedite his decision regarding its transfer. Fortunately Shah Alam had just desired Barker, in response to his petition, to protect Allahabad and Kora, and thus given the English General a plausible ground for claiming that it was "very necessary that the Allahabad fort should remain in the hands of His Majesty's servants (the English). The two places can then be guarded properly." A day or two later he informed the king that the select committee had advised him not to transfer the fort to the wazir "even if he receives His Majesty's orders," and requested Shah Alam to allow the retention of the fort in English hands. The English desire for retaining possession of the fort was heightened by Munir-ud-daulah's secret advice that the governor should keep in his hands the Allahabad and Kora forts which were "the gates of Bengal," and Cartier opposed its cession to Shuja on the ground that as a stronghold it was "the key to the royal possessions" and therefore it was imprudent to part with it before the emperor had achieved success in his Delhi expedition. "There is nothing certain in this world," wrote the clever governor to Shah Alam, "and an

<sup>3</sup> C.P.C., III. 762, 784, 816.

arrow when shot from the bow can never be recalled. His Majesty is wise enough to consider this and there is no use in adding." Cartier further informed the emperor that the latter's directions that the English should undertake the defence and supervise the revenue administration of the two districts could be followed only if the fort was allowed to remain in English possession.<sup>4</sup>

The English attitude caused much embarrassment to Shah Alam who had not only given word to Shuja, but had also issued written orders transferring the fort to him. Nor was he prepared to offend the English to whom he had just entrusted the protection of Kora and Allahabad and from whom he expected regular remittance of the Bengal tribute. Barker's ingenuity, however, suggested a plan that would relieve the king of the dilemma and would ensure the *de facto* possession of the fort by the English without at the same time ignoring the *de jure* claim of the wazir. He proposed that the emperor should write to the wazir to say that he had bestowed the fort on him, but at present he should not "demand its evacuation by the English, for their help in defending Allahabad and Kora is very necessary in these days, and there is no other place suitable for their sojourn. The wazir can send a man on his own behalf to take charge of the fort and to stay there with his domestic servants and a few necessary attendants; the English and their troops will remain in the fort as long as is necessary." Barker entered into correspondence with Shuja too on the subject, and on receipt of a favourable reply to his proposal from the emperor, he repaired to Faizabad (August 1771) to negotiate a satisfactory settlement of the dispute. But as the emperor

<sup>4</sup> C.P.C., III. 826, 838, 840, 849, 852, 875.

An exact parallel of Cartier's advice to Shah Alam is furnished by what the Mehta (Bania) party impressed upon the late ruler Maharana Fateh Singh of Udaipur. Leader of this party ensured their monopoly of high posts in the State by impressing upon him that they were his servants and subjects, while Rajputs, if appointed to high offices, would claim equality to him. It was therefore dangerous to share power with them.

had written one thing to Shuja and quite the contrary to Barker the negotiations proved futile. To the nawab-wazir he had written that the fort was given to him, his flag should fly over its walls and the English troops should remain for its protection on his (wazir) behalf, while he had asked Barker not to evacuate the fort until Shuja had repaired to the presence for service in the court. As there was no other powerful fortress in his dominions except Chunargarh which too was in the possession of the English, the wazir pleaded that it was not possible for him to proceed to join the emperor unless the fort was handed over to him for the residence of his family, and negotiations therefore broke down and Shuja and Barker came almost to the verge of a rupture. Barker returned<sup>5</sup> to Allahabad disappointed.

Shuja-ud-daulah, however, was not prepared for a conflict with the English on such a trifling issue, and therefore he explained to Cartier (about the middle of September 1771) the circumstances under which the fort was granted to him and requested him to solve the problem to the satisfaction of both the parties. While giving him leave of departure, he observed, the emperor had accused him of want of attachment for his failure to join the royal expedition to Delhi, and it was therefore to efface that stigma that he had requested for the Allahabad fort so that he might leave his family and dependants there and then join the imperial march, thinking that the request would not be complied with and he would be absolved of the charge of disloyalty. But contrary to his expectation the emperor immediately acceded to his proposal. The wazir assured Cartier that he had no intention of acquiring possession of the fort immediately, as the English troops were cantoned there and he was sure that the governor would deliver it to him whenever it was convenient. In January 1772, the Marathas began their march against Zabita Khan with Shah Alam nominally at the head of the expedition and the wazir anxious to prevent the flames of war from spreading to his frontier and to turn the confused

<sup>5</sup> C.P.C., III. 842, 898, 909.

occasion to his personal advantage sought the British help. Taking advantage of it, Barker reopened negotiations with Shuja and an understanding was now reached early in the first week of February, when Barker informed the Calcutta government that Shuja had agreed not to insist on the evacuation of the British troops and "at present he will be satisfied, if his flag flies from its walls." The final articles of agreement were drafted and approved on 20th March which for all practical purposes made the English masters of the Allahabad fort.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. How the English retained possession of Chunargarh ; Shuja's claim for its restoration.

According to the seventh clause of the treaty of Allahabad the Bengal government under Clive had bound themselves to evacuate the fort of Chunar and restore it to Shuja after he had paid off the last pie of the war indemnity of fifty lakhs. The wazir having cleared off the indemnity before the expiry of the time-limit, demanded the restoration of the fort. But at the congress of Chhaprah he was only given nominal charge of it, as the company's garrison still remained there and Clive succeeded in persuading him to give his assent to his proposal that the English garrison should not be removed from Chunargarh till the withdrawal of the British brigade from Allahabad. The brigade in question was stationed primarily for the protection of Shah Alam and his territory and at least a major portion of it was not likely to be withdrawn so long as he resided there, and this was what actually happened. Clive's diplomatic device therefore meant in practice the perpetuation of the English hold on Chunargarh.

Having so far had experience of the English justice and fairplay, Shuja-ud-daulah seems to have believed that Clive's promise was meant to be kept and therefore in January 1768 when the withdrawal of the brigade from Allahabad was in

<sup>6</sup> C.P.C., III. 937; Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., 29th January 1772 and, 3rd Feb. 1772 and 20th March, 1772; Aitchison, *Treaties, etc.* (vol. II ed. 1892), pp. 75-76.

contemplation he desired Barker, commander of the brigade, to deliver Chunargarh to him. But the select committee refused to comply with the nawab's request, "as we consider the fortress," wrote the committee to Barker, "to be absolutely necessary to our own security, whilst we are acting at his (Shuja's) requisition in defence of his dominions."<sup>7</sup> Early in 1767 the English garrison at Chunar was reinforced owing to the Abdali invasion of the Punjab and in September 1763, it was further strengthened, as the Bengal government entertained an apprehension from Shuja himself. This step was taken not only to prevent the wazir from surprising the garrison and obtaining effective control of the fort, but also to safeguard the company's troops and interests at Allahabad by thus keeping the route from Bengal to Oudh open. Two months later the Bengal government's deputaiaion desired under orders from Calcutta to exchange Shuja's districts of Benares and Ghazipur including the fort of Chunar with those of Kora and Allahabad including the fort of Allahabad with the object of converting the company's territories into a compact dominion and of making Chunar fort "a strong barrier" against any aggression from the west.<sup>8</sup> But Shuja would not agree to this scheme, as both the forts and all the four districts had once belonged to him and he was reluctant to give up for ever the prospect of recovering those that had been taken away from him by the treaty of Allahabad. Chunargarh therefore continued to have a dual government.

At the end of July 1769 when it was resolved by the select committee to withdraw the English brigade from Allahabad leaving only two battalions for the protection of the king and also the English battalions from the wazir's dominions, Shuja demanded the return of Chunargarh to him in fulfilment of Clive's promise at Chhaprah (1766). He reminded Verelst that Clive had given him word that as soon as the grain stored in Chunargarh was removed, the two *pahrās* (guards) of English troops who were stationed there

<sup>7</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Feb. 5, 1767.

<sup>8</sup> Letter to C.D., January 6, 1769.



to guard it, would be withdrawn from there. "It is now three years," he complained, "since the grain was taken away from the fort, yet the *pahras* have not been recalled." Once again it was promised, and this time by the deputation that visited Benares in November 1768, that after the recall of English troops from Oudh, the *pahras* from Chunargarh would be removed. "At present the troops have been recalled," wrote Shuja to the governor, "but the *pahras* are still there as before. Nay, formerly there were two *pahras* at Chunargarh, now two companies have been stationed there." Another cause of complaint was that the presence of the English troops in the fort caused "great disorder," and therefore Shuja appealed to Verelst for their recall, adding that if the governor would not accede to his request, he would "withdraw his own troops from the fort and leave it to the English."

Verelst's reply was characteristic of the Bengal government's policy at the time, namely, expediency. The select committee authorised him (11th August 1769) to write that the garrison would be removed "as soon as all our troops shall be withdrawn from Allahabad." The governor therefore informed the wazir that the reason responsible for garrisoning the fort was to keep the Bengal army's way to Allahabad open, that he (the wazir) had approved of the measure during the Abdali's invasion, and that the garrison could not be withdrawn, firstly because the nawab was proposing to undertake a long journey to Delhi along with the emperor, and secondly because there were still two battalions of English troops at Allahabad. He promised that whenever these battalions would be recalled, "not a single soldier will be allowed to remain at the fort of Chunargarh, and it will be handed over to His Excellency's people agreeably to the treaty." Verelst closed his letter by adding after the manner of Shuja that "when interests of the two parties are identical the remaining of a few men on the part of the English in the fort under pressure of the time should not displease His Excellency and interrupt the friendship that

exists between him and the English.”<sup>10</sup>

The Fort William authorities were not only not desirous of relinquishing Chunargarh, but they wanted, on the contrary, to become its sole master. Accordingly after Shah Alam's departure for Delhi a proposal was made to Shuja through Barker to exchange Chunar with the Allahabad fort which, as we have already seen, was conferred on him by the emperor, and the select committee expressed its willingness to hand over the latter fort to the wazir if he agreed to the exchange. But the difficulty lay in the fact that neither the English had the intention of yielding absolute possession of the Allahabad fort, nor was Shuja at all willing to make Chunargarh over to them in perpetuity. As a matter of fact Shuja wanted the sole possession of both the forts, and the English policy too aimed at effective control of both. Hence no satisfactory solution could be arrived at till March 1772, when, owing to the Maratha invasion of Ruhelkhand, Shuja stood in need of English co-operation and assistance in his projected designs on the Ruhela country, and Barker seizing the opportunity cleverly sought to enforce the Bengal government's demand regarding Chunargarh. The wazir was not in a position to refuse to comply and he accepted all the terms dictated by the General on 20th March 1772. The agreement signed at Sandi contained the following terms:— Firstly, in order to enable the English to fulfil their obligation of assisting him with their forces, Shuja allowed Chunargarh to be held lay them and “to be garrisoned solely by their troops, so long as it may be necessary for the support of His Highness' interest or the interest of the English East India Company, and for the preservation of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.” Secondly, whenever the English found it necessary, they would deliver the fort to Shuja, and the latter “shall at all times” evacuate it for the English troops for “their sole use and purpose” whenever they advanced on the west of the Karamnasa. And thirdly, the wazir would pay all the expenses of the repairs, additions etc., of the fortification of the fort to be incurred by the English during

<sup>10</sup> C.P.C., III. 1534; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., August 11, 1769.

their occupation of it upon its re-delivery to him ; but this expenditure was not to exceed four lakhs of rupees. These terms were so favourable to the English that, as Barker reported to the Calcutta authorities they practically meant the cession of the fort to them.<sup>11</sup>

The British policy regarding Chunargarh from the time of Clive to that of Cartier was governed by considerations of expediency, and it can be defended solely on the ground that as the fort enjoyed a highly strategic importance its control was necessary, if not altogether indispensable, for keeping the British line of communication between Calcutta and Allahabad open, and for guarding against an emergency, if Shuja ever dreamt of opening hostilities against the company. But from moral and political considerations it is open to criticism. Had Clive had the realisation of its importance in time he would have easily and legitimately acquired it at the treaty of Allahabad, when Shuja was prepared for almost any terms. As it was not done then, recourse had to be taken to one subterfuge after another, for retaining a garrison in the fort, then increasing its strength and finally for taking the full and effective possession of the fort. Secondly, among several other causes that contributed to undermine Shuja's faith in the integrity of the English word, the Chunargarh episode was one of the most potent. Thirdly, the policy not only directly infringed the seventh article of the treaty of Allahabad, but also violated more than one solemn promise made thereafter by Clive and Verelst to the wazir. Finally the effect of the policy on other Indian rulers, especially on Shah Alam, was injurious. When the Emperor heard the rumours, caused by the prolonged negotiations between the wazir and the Bengal government that the English had relinquished Chunar fortress to Shuja-ud-daulah agreeably to the terms of the treaty of 1765, he was highly pleased and sent Verelst "a thousand praises" for "so just an act," and expressed the

<sup>11</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Barker, 27th August, 1771 ; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1771, pp. 286-327 ; Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., August 29, 1771 ; Tr. of King's letter to Barker, August 9, 1771 ; Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., January 29, and March 20, 1772 ; *Aitchison*, etc. Vol. II. 74-75.

hope that the governor "will fulfil the engagements into which the English had entered with His Majesty." One can easily imagine the feelings of the emperor when he was told that the rumour was baseless and Chunargarh was still held by the English battalions.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. Cartier's attempt to reopen the abolished trade with Oudh.

The eighth clause of the treaty of Allahabad, which laid down that the wazir would permit the company "to carry on a trade, duty free, throughout the whole of his dominions," was not executed for about a year in deference to the feelings of Shuja-ud-daulah who was opposed to organised English trade in Oudh. At the congress of Chhaprah in June 1766, Clive was, however, able to persuade the unwilling wazir to permit private English merchants as well as those in the company's service to trade on their individual account in his provinces, and accordingly many an English trader and some Dutch, French and American merchant adventurers flocked into Shuja's dominions and began trading, specially in saltpetre. As all these had brought with them permits from the English governor and some of them also letters of recommendation from Verelst himself or some other high officers in Bengal, they were given concessions and shown much regard by the wazir. But as was apprehended by Shuja, *gumāshtās* of these European traders, conscious of the Bengal government's backing, displayed arrogance, and many of them became guilty of high-handed extortion, malpractices and misconduct. The wazir therefore felt himself under the disagreeable necessity of lodging complaints against them with the Fort William authorities. Verelst readily listened to these complaints for two reasons, firstly because he did not like to give Shuja legitimate cause for dissatisfaction, and secondly because some of these merchants,

<sup>12</sup> C.P.C., II. 1626.

Dr. N. L. Chatterji discusses the Chunargarh episode in his *Verelst's Rule in India*, pp. 17-19, from the British point of view, leaving out of account some pertinent facts that clearly establish the contrary view.



notably William Bolts, were alleged to be carrying on correspondence with Gentil and Shuja to the prejudice of the company's interests, and therefore the governor and council took immediate steps and requested the wazir (22nd December 1767) to remove all European merchants from his dominions. As a matter of fact the proceedings of some of these merchants caused much worry to the Bengal government. Although Shuja strongly repudiated the allegations that Nicol and Davie were training his troops and manufacturing guns for him the English suspicion was not altogether dispelled. The greatest difficulty, however, was with Bolts the relations between whom and Verelst had degenerated into a personal and acrimonious dispute. It was therefore thought desirable to recall to Bengal not only Bolts but also all other European merchants and their *gumāshīs*, and orders were issued (May 1768) prohibiting the company's servants and all Europeans under the company's protection from trading directly or indirectly in the territory of Shuja-ud-daulah. Those already engaged in trade in Oudh were however given two months' time for the adjustment of their outstanding concerns, and if they failed to carry out the orders and close their business within the specified time, they were to be punished with confiscation of their goods and dismissal from the company's service and in case of free merchants withdrawal of protection. Shuja-ud-daulah welcomed the prohibition, as such a free and privileged trade was undoubtedly against his interests, and thanked the governor for the measure.<sup>13</sup>

The prohibition was not approved of by the Court of Directors who instructed the Bengal government to exercise their right of free trade in Oudh. The prohibitory orders had hardly been in force<sup>14</sup> for three years when it was resolved

<sup>13</sup> Letter to Court of Directors, Sept. 18, 1768; Ben. Pub. Progs., August-December, 1767, pp. 1063-65; Ben. O. C. (Pub.), May 18, 1768; C.P.C., II. 38, 157, 193, 322, 385, 440, 469, 599, 809, 810, 835, 851, 864, 894, 899, 920, 981, 989, 1050, 1069, 1159, 1173.

<sup>14</sup> The prohibition was not complete as one or two Europeans continued trading in Oudh with Verelst's special permission. See C.P.C., 1553; III. 862 and 867.



by the select committee on 17th April, 1771 to cancel them and to throw open trade in Shuja's country to English merchants without consulting him on the matter or giving him any information relating to it. Shuja was surprised and even hurt on the receipt of the information of the publication of Cartier's orders at Patna and Murshidabad. In addition to himself writing direct to Cartier he asked Barker to communicate to Calcutta his strong objection to the measure and his reasons against its enforcement. The wazir's objection was twofold; firstly, that despite some advantage to his people, free trade carried on by foreign merchants would cause a heavy drain of specie from his dominions and notwithstanding the prohibition at English instance of saltpetre trade in his subahs, Europeans could not be restrained from trading in it and the advantages were likely to be counter-balanced by disadvantages: and secondly, English trade with its concomitants, the *gumāshtās*, factory and sepoy systems, was sure to cause a conflict between the traders and their *gumāshtās* on the one hand and the officers of his government on the other which, he was afraid, must lead to misunderstanding and dispute between him and the company. Hence the wazir suggested that none should be allowed to trade in his dominions without taking special licence from him (Shuja), the only mode that would obviate his objections, as in that case he would be able to regulate and limit the trade.<sup>15</sup>

Cartier's proclamation now became almost a dead letter and he had to write personally to the wazir (January, 1772) to persuade him to agree to the revival of free trade. His arguments were; firstly, that the English had always consulted the wazir's interests and therefore it was hoped that he would favour to advance the prosperity of the English as "his interests are identical with theirs;" secondly, that the

<sup>15</sup> Barker to Cartier, June 3, 1771, *Vide*, Pub. O.C. (Bengal), June 26, 1771. No. 9; C.P.C., III. 813. Cartier informed the wazir of the committee's resolution in a letter dated 18th (according to Volume of copies, 28th) June, which must have reached Shuja at the end of June, 1771. (C.P.C., III. 794.) The saltpetre trade was prohibited by the English.

English suffered a very great loss owing to stoppage of their trade beyond the Karamnasa and their merchandise such as lead, copper, iron and broad cloth imported by the company into Bengal was selling at a loss there, as it was much more than could be consumed by Bengal; thirdly, that in the agreement between him and Clive it was laid down that the English would have the privilege of trading in his dominions and finally that the abolition of this trade had caused equal loss to Shuja as to the English. Cartier even agreed to the imposition of any reasonable duty by the wazir on all other articles, except copper, lead, iron, and broad cloth if he permitted English merchants to trade in Oudh.<sup>16</sup>

The question was, however, postponed temporarily owing to Shuja's stiff attitude till the appointment of Warren Hastings.

#### 5. A fight between Sabit Khanis and Jhilangas, Jan., 1772.

On January 20, 1772 two different divisions of the wazir's army came to blows in the streets of Faizabad, which caused so great a tumult and disturbance in the town that Shuja was compelled to take prompt and vigorous measures to bring the quarrel to an end and to inflict a condign punishment on those who were responsible for the sanguinary strife. The dispute arose out of an insignificant altercation between two soldiers, one belonging to the Sabit Khani battalion and the other to the Jhilanga battalion, and quickly degenerated into a free fight between these two sections of the army. On the above mentioned day a Sabit Khani and a Jhilanga were purchasing flour at a *Bania's* shop, and each was anxious to have it first. The shopkeeper was handing it over to one when the other out of impatience and a feeling of revenge for his discomfiture threw it down from the scale-pan. The shopkeeper looked significantly at the former, indicating by his look that the flour thrown down was already sold to him. Now the two soldiers exchanged filthy abuse and then blows and the Sabit Khani was the first to strike his dagger in the

<sup>16</sup> C.P.C., III, 1021.

belly of the Jhilanga, wounding him badly.<sup>17</sup> Being informed of this some of the Jhilangas ran to the scene of the quarrel, gave a severe beating to the Sabit Khani and confined him in the house of the commander of their battalion, Khawaja Basant. It was now Sabit Khani's turn to attempt to take revenge and about two hundred of them under Shah Beg, a subordinate officer of the battalion, besieged the house of Basant and defeated and drove away the Jhilangas, and Basant had fled away to the wazir by a back-door to complain to him of the outrageous conduct of the Sabit Khanis. Shuja summoned Mir Naim Khan, commanding officer of the Sabit Khani battalion and gave him peremptory instructions for the withdrawal of his troops from Basant's house. But the Sabit Khanis' temper had run very high and the Mir's endeavours to pacify them and to bring them to their sense of duty proved futile. This enraged the nawab who issued orders for the Tilanga, Najib and some other battalions, about 20,000 strong, to assemble and proceed to Basant's house to chastise the rebellious Sabit Khanis. When the news of the movements of the wazir's troops reached the former, three hundred Sabit Khanis, then in their barracks, rushed to the assistance of their comrades in arms round Basant's residence, and a battle seemed to be imminent. The march of such a large number of troops in two hostile columns through the streets of the town and the gloomy prospect of a civil war produced consternation and people began to look about for their safety. Very soon the rival parties came face to face and Murtaza Khan Bareech and Gopal Rao Maratha launched an attack on the Sabit Khanis, while the Naga brothers at the head of five thousand troops marching to the residential quarters of the rebellious regiments at Shuja's direction first

<sup>17</sup> Of the two authorities who recorded this quarrel one (Harcharan) says that the Sabit Khani was the first to come to the shop, the Bania attended to him first and the Jhilanga threw away the flour meant for the Sabit Khani, while the other (Imad) maintains that the Jhilanga arrived first and was served first and the Sabit Khani threw away the flour from the scale-pan. But both agree that the Sabit Khani was the first to strike his blow.

fell upon their property and then set fire to their houses. The cries and lamentations of Sabit Khani women and children, leaving their belonging to be plundered by Gosain troops and fleeing about for safety, filled the atmosphere and added to the confusion. By this time most of the nawab's troops including the English battalions had arrived, and the Sabit Khanis, who had already suffered heavy losses and were confounded by the plight of their families, retreated fighting beyond the ditch outside the city wall, leaving 300 of their number dead in the streets and drowned in the moat. A large number of Jhilanga and some other troops estimated by Harcharn Das at the exaggerated figure of 3200 were slain in the conflict, many shops and houses were plundered and some innocent citizens lost their lives. After the commotion was over, an enquiry revealed that Shah Beg, a subaltern officer in the battalion was responsible for exciting the Sabit Khanis and leading them to the siege of Basant's house, and therefore he was dismissed the service and thrown into prison.<sup>18</sup>

#### 6. Shuja's unrealised scheme of building a fort.

Shuja-ud-daulah had for long been desirous of erecting a strong fort on a strategic site that might provide his family and dependents a place of safety and could be defended against a powerful enemy, as the only important fortresses in his dominions were Chunargarh and Allahabad fort which were in the hands of the English since 1764. First the wazir chose Cawnpore for this purpose, obtained a grant of the place from Shah Alam and stationed about two battalions of his troops there as a preparatory measure for erecting fortifications; but not long after he gave it up as unsuitable, an important reason probably being that it was gradually becoming an English outpost in that region. Subsequently the wazir undertook several tours, one after another, in the guise of hunting expeditions, to the country round Bahramghat and to Gorakhpur district with the object of discovering a strategic place in a bend of the Ghaghra, but without success. The idea, however, persisted in his mind and in

<sup>18</sup> *Harcharan*, 507a and b; *Imad*, 105-106.

October 1771 he enquired from Barker whether it would be possible for Fort William authorities to give him the loan of English engineers to assist him in planning and erecting a fort and fortification after European fashion. He again travelled across the Sarju (Ghaghra) as far as Gorakhpur, investigating the land, but had to return disappointed. The English reply to his request could not possibly have been given in the negative; but the wazir did not follow the policy of depending upon the British engineering skill, and even before he could expect an answer from Calcutta, he employed three or four French experts from Pondicherry, one of whom was an able engineer, despite the English remonstrance and persuasion to the contrary. This French engineer built "a masterly model fortification of bricks," and Harper wrote to the Calcutta council that if they did not agree to depute an English engineer, Shuja-ud-daulah would get the French architect to execute his orders.<sup>19</sup> But meanwhile a few more pressing problems absorbed the wazir's attention, and the project of building a fort had to be postponed.

### 7. Negotiations with the Marathas ; an important Occurrence.

An important question that pressed itself on Shuja's attention was how to meet the obviously approaching Maratha danger. Mahadji Sindhia had joined the emperor on 18th November, 1771, and it was openly talked about that the Marathas would soon undertake an expedition against the Ruhelas. Feeling that in the event of a Maratha invasion of Ruhelkhand his western frontier was likely to be threatened, Shuja set about concerting measurers for its defence, put a part of his army in motion in the direction of Cawnpore and invited Barker to Faizabad to discuss with him the steps that should be taken to meet the situation. The Marathas, however, were at this time divided into two rival parties, of which the one under Visaji and Tukoji Holkar was advocating

<sup>19</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., Oct. 29, 1771; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., July 6, Nov. 4, 10 and 22 and Dec. 7, 1771; C.P.C., III. 1022.



reduction of Oudh and Allahabad, while the other under Mahadji Sindhia was in favour of an alliance with Shuja, and of inviting him to Delhi to conduct the imperial administration in conjunction with the Marathas, and hence there was not much to fear from the Marathas at least at this juncture. Soon after having his first audience with Shah Alam the real Maratha leader Mahadji Sindhia had arranged to send his sister's son Bahirji Takpir to the wazir to persuade him to move to the court. The mission had another object, namely, to ask the wazir to make a common cause with the Marathas against the Ruhelas and attack Ruhelkhand from the east, while the Marathas invaded it from the north and west. Bahirji arrived at Faizabad on 17th December, 1771 and after three or four months' stay there, returned to the imperial court with Shuja's special envoys Elich Khan and Anup Giri Gosain *alias* Rajah Himmat Bahadur for continuing negotiations on the above subjects.<sup>20</sup>

One incident illustrative of Shuja's treatment towards his subordinates may be related, as it occurred in August, 1772. While returning from the pleasures of a chase Shuja was agreeably surprised to pass through a well-laid out and prosperous village north of Sarju belonging to the taluqa of Rai Dwarka Prasad, and it was reported that all the villages under him were similarly well managed and well provided. On his return to Faizabad the nawab's enquiry revealed that the revenues of a large number of villages was farmed out to the Rai who paid to the State the stipulated amount, but the major portion of the collections went into his pocket. The wazir's cupidity was excited by the tale of the plenty in the Rai's taluqa. Having summoned Dwarka Prasad to Faizabad, he put him under arrest on the pretence of ordering a scrutiny of the accounts of his payment to the treasury and made a demand of three lakhs of rupees on him. After much haggling the demand was reduced to one lakh and the Rai was released only when Rajah Himmat Bahadur promised to

<sup>20</sup> *Harcharan*, 507b; S.P.D., XXIX. 270; Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., Nov. 30, 1771; Barker to Hastings and Council, Shahabad, May 15, 1772.

stand surety for the sum. Dwarka Prasad had served the Oudh ruling family faithfully since the days of Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-mulk and he continued representing to the wazir and when it was established as the result of further enquiries that he was in the habit of spending his savings and not hoarding them, Shuja eventually remitted the fine unjustly imposed on him. He, however, did not restore to the Rai his three elephants and eighty horses that had formed part of his escort that had accompanied Dwarka Prasad to Faizabad.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Harcharan*, 508b.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE PRELUDE TO THE RUHELA WAR

#### 1. Shuja revises his policy towards the Marathas.

The Maratha junction with Shah Alam in November 1771 gave rise to speculation about their next move, and it was rightly believed that as soon as they had conducted the emperor to Delhi, they would return to Ruhelkhand the subjugation of which they had temporarily postponed early that year in order to accomplish the bigger and more profitable and at the same time equally spectacular feat of bringing the imperial capital in their possession and restoring the Mughal sovereign to his ancestral throne, of course, as a puppet in their hands after the manner of the English in Bengal. Despite repeated warnings and exhortations from Cartier, Shuja-ud-daulah had refused to be alarmed during the Maratha invasion of Ruhelkhand in 1770. But owing to the recent change in the political situation which made the Marathas the real power behind the throne, the wazir now thought it imprudent to complacently await the course of events when the Deccani chiefs were contemplating an invasion of the neighbouring state; for if threatened by that superior power, now reinforced by the prestige of the emperor's name and sanction, the Ruhelas would most probably consider it politic to save their homeland by the cession of a part of it and by joining their forces with those of the invader against Oudh on which the Marathas were supposed to have had their designs for some time. But if, on the other hand, the Ruhelas chose to offer resistance to the bitter end and the Marathas established themselves in Ruhelkhand, they would be a source of permanent danger to Oudh.<sup>1</sup> In either case it was highly

<sup>1</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., January 21, 1772.

likely that the Marathas would use the weapon of the imperial name against Shuja as the English had done in 1764-65. It was also probable that the Marathas would claim the districts of Kora and Allahabad in the name of Shah Alam to whom they had belonged till recently, and as the wazir now considered them as his own,<sup>2</sup> he was determined to take measures for their protection, whereas in 1770 he had looked upon the English as responsible for their defence against the Maratha aggression. Moreover, when in 1770 he had followed the policy of neutrality in regard to the Marathas and had instigated them against the Ruhelas, it was absolutely clear to him that the invaders then did not aim at a permanent conquest and annexation of Ruhelkhand and all that they wanted was its systematic spoliation and the wresting from the Ruhela hands that part of the territory which the latter had usurped after the Maratha defeat at Panipat, while Shuja was now afraid—and this he naturally kept concealed from Barker and others—lest the proposed Maratha expedition should reduce the Ruhela dominions to the status of a province of the empire and frustrate his long cherished ambition, namely the conquest and annexation of Ruhelkhand to Oudh, in near future. And finally a shrewd politician that he was, the wazir would not like that the already powerful Marathas should become too formidable a power in northern India. Despite such a substantial change in his attitude, Shuja was anxious to avoid direct conflict with them; but he was equally anxious to defend his territory and to prevent the Marathas from gaining a permanent footing in Ruhelkhand.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Shuja's preliminary precautions

The rumours of the intended Maratha invasion of their homeland naturally alarmed the Ruhelas, and Hafiz Rahmat reopened correspondence with Shuja, appealing to him for

<sup>2</sup> Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., January 29, 1773.

<sup>3</sup> Barker to Hastings and Council, Shahabad, May 15, 1772.

assistance, and begged Harper's active mediation in negotiating a defensive alliance with him and the English. Some other Ruhela chiefs such as Zabita Khan and the sons of Dunde Khan followed suit. In view of the recent political developments the wazir reciprocated the Ruhela sentiments of friendliness and approved of the proposal for an alliance. He ordered preparations for his proceeding to Mahdighat on the Ganges below Qannauj in order to have a personal interview with Hafiz and settle terms of the proposed alliance. On 22nd November he actually despatched a powerful force, consisting of 3,000 cavalry, four battalions of sepoys trained after European fashion and 2,000 other infantry and thirty pieces of cannon under his third son Mirza Jangli to his western frontier, with instructions to wait near Lucknow till they were joined by a second detachment to be sent soon from Faizabad, and then both together to proceed to the Ganges near Bangarmau, 32 miles north-west of Cawnpore, and halt there till further orders.<sup>4</sup> The wazir recalled his troops under the Gosain chief who had been commissioned to escort the emperor to Delhi, as soon as it became known that the Marathas had effected junction with the imperialists, but continued amusing with negotiations those Maratha envoys who had come to seek his assistance in their intended campaign against Ruhelkhand. He summoned Munir-ud-daulah to his presence to discuss measures necessary for the protection of Allahabad and Kora, and invited Barker to Faizabad to sound him regarding English assistance that he could expect, and requested Cartier to despatch some English troops to accompany him to the frontier of Ruhelkhand.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., Nov. 4, 10, 22, 1771; *Harcharan*, 507b. *Khair-ud-din*, p. 221, says that Hafiz wrote that if Shuja did not help him he would be obliged to join the Marathas in invading Oudh.

<sup>5</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., Dec. 18, 1771; Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., January 21, 1772; C. P. C. III., 1039; *Harcharan*, 507b.

Sir John Strachey seems to think that the Ruhelas appealed to Shuja for help and the wazir wrote to Cartier for it and invited Barker to Faizabad after the Marathas had invaded Zabita's territory and defeated and put him to flight (*vide his Hastings and the Rohilla War*, pp. 42-45). But



### 3. Barker meets Shuja, 20th January, 1772.

From the very beginning the English had held pretty nearly uniform views about the Marathas, and although they were not in favour of an open conflict with them, the English policy aimed at the prevention of a permanent Maratha lodgement in Ruhelkhand, so close to Oudh and Allahabad. But in conformity with their settled policy they wished to keep themselves in the background and as usual desired the wazir to assume the role of the leader to oppose the Maratha aggression. Accordingly the select committee welcomed the change in Shuja's attitude towards the Marathas at its meeting on 6th December 1771 and resolved that he should be advised to enter into a defensive alliance with the Ruhela chiefs.<sup>6</sup> Barker was authorised to give the wazir a meeting at Faizabad where he arrived on 19th January 1772. He was received a few miles in advance by Elich Khan, and the wazir, who had been convalescent after a brief illness, met him on the 20th. By this time the Maratha preparations for an invasion of Zabita Khan's territory had been completed and their forces had begun their march, followed by the emperor who left Delhi on 16th January. Shuja, therefore, dwelt on Shah Alam's dependence on the Marathas and requested Barker to accompany him to his western frontier so as to give weight to the negotiations that he was carrying on with the Ruhelas, and no doubt also with the Marathas (which he kept concealed from Barker), in order to bring about a settlement between the above two powers by persuading the Ruhelas to cede to the Marathas the districts acquired from the latter after their defeat at Panipat in 1761 with a view to save their principal territory bordering on Oudh. Although the wazir coveted for himself a share in the Ruhela country, (of which also he gave no hint to Barker at this time) he was optimistic regarding the success of his mission, as the Ruhelas had no

the fact is that both Shuja and the Ruhelas took the above steps *before* the Marathas had marched against Zabita.

<sup>6</sup> Ben. Sel. Com., Progs., Dec. 6, 1771.

alternative, if they wanted to save themselves from destruction, and the Marathas would welcome it, for the trend of events in Poona seemed to indicate that their presence should be required there in near future. But as he had throughout pursued the policy of subjugating Ruhelkhand and made more than one open attempt to enslave his neighbours, the Ruhelas were naturally suspicious and would not have any faith in the rectitude of his intentions, and hence he begged Barker to associate the English name with the enterprise. As a matter of fact Hafiz Rahmat had already made it clear that he wanted the united assistance of the wazir and the English. Barker was convinced of Shuja's logic and promised to proceed along with him to the border of Ruhelkhand. He ordered a battalion of troops from Allahabad to march to the lines at Cawnpore and requested Cartier to approve of the wazir's proposal, as it was in his opinion, "the only means of preventing the almost certainty of an attack on the Vizier's or Company's possessions sooner or later," and also because the settlement, as it was to be effected through English mediation, would enhance their reputation in the country.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. Shuja proceeds to his western frontier ; the Ruhelas flee to the Tarai jungles

While awaiting the Bengal government's sentiments, Shuja took some more precautionary measures, and in the first week of February despatched another contingent of his troops towards Lucknow and ordered those at the latter place to move on to the frontier. The negotiations with the Ruhelas were also continued. Meanwhile the select committee's resolution of 3rd February, authorising Barker to accompany Shuja to his frontier, "to act on the part of the Hon'ble Company in the negotiations that may occur on this subject," namely a general pacification between the Marathas and the Ruhelas, and approving of his having

<sup>7</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., January 21, 28, 1772; Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, III. 49; *Mirat-i-Aftab-Numa*, p. 259b., and *Mutakhirin*, p. 210a, (for the date of the emperor's start).

ordered a battalion to Cawnpore, together with Cartier's promise that if the invasion of the allied territory were a certainty he would secure the council's permission for despatching a brigade to Buxar, reached Faizabad and therefore the wazir, accompanied by Barker, set out towards Lucknow sometime in the third week of February. On the way he revealed to Barker the progress of his negotiations with the Ruhelas and the hitc<sup>9</sup> in the conclusion of an agreement with them. Shuja's proposal was that Hafiz Rahmat should proceed to the assistance of Zabita Khan who was threatened in the vicinity of Shakartal, while he himself would cross the Ganges and recover those districts which had been given to the Ruhelas by Abdali Shah but had been reconquered by the Marathas in 1770. Peace could then easily be made with the latter, he thought, at advantageous terms. But Shuja must be paid the expenses of his troops in the campaign either in ready money or by cession of territory. Hafiz, on the other hand, urged the wazir to proceed to succour Zabita at Shakartal and leave to him the defence of Ruhelkhand proper with his troops and those of his colleagues. Nor would the Ruhela chief agree to bear the expenses of the wazir's army or cede to him any strip of the Ruhela territory, for the above measures were necessary, he argued, as much for the defence of Oudh as of Ruhelkhand. Hafiz's attitude disappointed the wazir who was now inclined to hold back. At this time Barker took the extraordinary step of promising Shuja the backing of the English troops,<sup>8</sup> while persuading him to give up the negative policy of holding back in favour of active military assistance to the Ruhelas. This was what the wazir really desired and at the promise of English assistance, he prepared to resume his march from Lucknow towards Ruhelkhand. It was also necessary to inspire confidence in the Ruhelas so that they might not enter into an understanding with the Marathas, and therefore Barker assured

<sup>8</sup> Barker to Hastings and Council, dated Shahabad May 15, 1772, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., June 1, 1772.

Hafiz that the wazir would do nothing against Ruhelkhand, during the absence of the Ruhela chiefs, if they marched to aid Zabita at Shakatral. Much valuable time was wasted in the above proceedings and it was too late when Hafiz eventually agreed to set out to reinforce Zabita. The wazir had not moved beyond Lucknow before the Marathas crossed the Ganges at Chandighat, one mile south of Hardwar, a few hours before the day dawned on 23rd February and inflicted a decisive defeat on the advance post of Zabita's forces under Saadat Khan Afridi who was slain in the field and which so daunted the craven spirit of Zabita that he evacuated his fortified position at Shakartaral during the night and fled to the Tarai jungles at the foot of the Himalayas. This news of Ruhela defeat reached Shuja at Bangarmau, 32 miles north-west of Cawnpore, on 28th and so much disturbed him that he thought it necessary to request Barker to send for a brigade of the company's troops so as to be prepared to face any emergency. Accordingly Barker directed Champion who commanded the first brigade, then at Dinapore, to hasten to join him as soon as possible, and the latter began his march on 10th March. Shuja and party made about a fortnight's halt at Bangarmau to await news of further developments in Ruhelkhand the northern portion of which had by this time been overrun by the Marathas who also closely invested Pathargurh, one mile east of Najibabad. At Bangarmau disquieting tidings were received in quick succession that the entire Ruhela race was terror-stricken, that their chiefs and officers were fleeing away to the hills with their families and valuables, abandoning their homes and property to the tender mercy of the ruthless invaders. Despite assurance of help from Shuja and Barker, Hafiz too joined the fugitives, and on 5th March retreated towards Pilibhit *en route* for the Tarai jungles.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Barker, February 8, 1772; Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 3, 25, 28 and March 6, 9 and 10, 1772; Tr. of Zabita's letter to Barker (for battle and his flight, etc.), *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., July 3, 1772.

**5. Shuja covets Ruhelkhand for himself ; Barker negotiates an alliance with the Ruhelas**

During his march from Bangarmau to Sandi, 32 miles north-west of the former town, Shuja, who had been in communication with the Marathas, felt strongly disposed to divide Ruhelkhand with them, as it seemed to him a futile policy to endeavour to prop up the Ruhelas whose ruin had apparently been already accomplished. This desire was in harmony with his long cherished and steadily pursued policy, namely, the acquisition of Ruhelkhand by hook or crook ; though his means had varied from time to time according to changes in the political situation. It is worthy of note that the wazir had never bothered himself about the moral quality of his means, and his only anxiety was that his acts should not injure his reputation. Now, when Ruhelkhand was denuded of troops and abandoned by its rulers, the wazir thinking that the prize was within his grasp, desired to seize Hafiz Rahmat's territory, and to accept the Maratha proposal to parcel out the whole of Ruhelkhand with them. As he told Barker, it was foolish for him to keep himself aloof, as in the event of a settlement between the Ruhelas and the Marathas without his mediation, their united forces were bound to be directed against him, and therefore he had to choose between the alternatives, namely, either exerting himself to bring about peace between them and thus saving his dominions from their possible joint invasion or coming to an understanding with the Marathas, and having his share in the spoils of the Ruhela country. "He (Shuja) tells me," reported Barker to the Calcutta authorities, on 9th April, "he has no choice, for he must either join the Marathas in the total reduction of the Rohillas, or bring on a compromise between these powers ; for the alternative is an attack upon his dominions after the (Maratha) reduction of the Rohillas". Barker, however, was naturally firmly opposed to this attitude on the part of the wazir, and as the latter was now reluctant to join the



Ruhelas against the invaders, the English general urged upon him the policy of befriending the Ruhelas and of bringing about a compromise between them and the Marathas; and in order to obviate the chances of his wavering any further, he promptly despatched Harper (early in April) to the fugitive Ruhela chiefs for initiating discussion, of course, after taking the wazir's consent, and pursued the tactics of protracting negotiations till he received definite instructions from Calcutta on the course he should adopt. The Ruhelas were glad to entrust negotiations with the Marathas to Shuja under the English auspices and to make him the medium of the restoration of their territory, if the wazir bound himself to support them in their possessions. Shuja demanded from them, as the price of the proposed service, the sum of one crore of rupees, out of which thirty to forty lakhs were to be given to the Marathas, some to the English and the remaining—the major portion—to be kept by the wazir himself. But the Ruhelas agreed to offer only fifty lakhs,<sup>10</sup> and therefore further negotiations were considered necessary to reach an amicable settlement.

#### 6. The Bengal government's disapproval of Barker's measures

The Bengal government's attitude towards the above measures was not encouraging. It disapproved of Barker's conduct in ordering the first brigade to march to Shuja's assistance without its previous permission, and directed Champion, the commander of the brigade, who had begun his march from Dinapore on 10th March, to halt where he was. The committee's reasons were that the act was self-authority, that there was no immediate danger to Shuja's territory, that the wazir had not made any such request to the governor and that he should first agree to bear all the expenses of the brigade, both ordinary and extraordinary.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., March 9, 10 and April 9 and 22, 1772.

<sup>11</sup> Cartier to Champion, 15th March, 1772, *vide Soldiering in India*, p. 82; Hastings to George Colebrooke, March 26, 1772, *vide* Strachey's

Barker, however, explained that there was real danger and but for the movement of the first brigade the Marathas would have followed up their success, overrun the whole of Ruhelkhand and threatened Shuja's country, and that the presence of English troops with him was necessary not merely to check the progress of the Marathas but also to prevent the wazir from entering into an alliance with the Marathas against the Ruhelas, which must be highly prejudicial to the interests of the company. Although the above explanation was fallacious inasmuch as there was really no danger to Shuja's dominions and much less to the company's, as the wazir, a shrewd politician that he was, could not think of entering into an alliance with a power inimical to the English, it was considered satisfactory by the committee and Barker was given discretionary power to ask the first brigade to advance,—a power that the general did not use in the present case, obviously because there was no real danger from the Marathas. Barker was at the same time advised to avoid war with the Marathas and not to give them cause to suspect English hostility. He was further instructed to settle with the wazir the charges of the company's troops in his service at the rate of current rupees 1,15,000 per month per brigade ; and it may be mentioned here that the above rate was approved of by Shuja without altercation.<sup>12</sup> On 30th April, when W. Hastings had been in the governor's seat for more than two weeks, the Bengal government refused to promise assistance to Shuja, which Barker seemed to be asking for, in the prosecution of an aggressive war outside the company's dominions. A little later after Barker's efforts had already been crowned with success—they strongly objected to Barker's sending Harper to the Ruhela chiefs

*Hastings and the Rohilla War*, pp. 59-62 ; Ben. Sec. Com. to Barker, March 17, 1772.

<sup>12</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., March 31, 1772 ; Barker to Hastings and Council, May 15, 1772 ; Ben. Sec. Com. to Barker, April 16, 1772.

No other contemporary authority except Barker says that the wazir's country was in danger of a Maratha attack.

as a virtual "plenipotentiary" and directed the general to withdraw the English troops to Bihar.<sup>13</sup>

### 7. Zabita and Hafiz seek refuge with Shuja

In the meantime Harper's mission with the Ruhelas seemed to be threatened with failure, as Hafiz did not raise his offer above fifty lakhs. Shuja's negotiations with the Marathas too did not appear to offer bright prospects of a settlement, for the Marathas, knowing that the English troops under Champion had not proceeded beyond Benares, raised their demands, and by 10th May there was a fear that the conversations would be broken off. The Ruhelas had, however, no alternative except to buy themselves by payment of money, as they were not only starving but also suffering badly from the damp and malarial climate of the Tarai. A hundred to two hundred of them were dying every day and many were falling ill and deserting their chiefs.<sup>14</sup> Growing sick of privation and misery and anxious to effect the release of his wives and children, Zabita decided to accept Shuja's proposal and to leave for his camp at Shahabad, where he arrived on 12th May. Shuja received him with great cordiality and consideration and he was so much impressed by the wazir's attention and generosity that he "seems to have trusted entirely to the pleasure of the English and the Vizier." Although Harper was once again sent to induce other Ruhelas to come and join the wazir, Hafiz and other chiefs continued for some days more to temporise with both the parties. "However, they have conducted themselves in such a treacherous and undetermined manner," writes Barker, "by agreeing to one proposal in the morning and retracting it in the evening without the least regard to veracity that they have most justly incurred the Nabob's resentment." Despite such duplicity on the part of the fugitives, Harper eventually succeeded in persuading Hafiz to see the wazir at Shahabad. At the head of 1,000 troops he arrived near Shahabad on the

<sup>13</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. to Barker, April 30 and July 8, 1772.

<sup>14</sup> S.P.D. Vol. XXIX. 271.

23rd and the wazir, accompanied by Barker, rode out to receive him on 25th, showing him as much attention and courtesy as to Zabita.<sup>15</sup>

By this time the negotiations between Shuja and the Marathas had reached a decisive stage, and although no formal treaty or agreement seems to have been concluded, an understanding was arrived at to the effect that the wazir would persuade the Ruhelas to pay to the Maratha chiefs an indemnity of forty lakhs and the latter would then evacuate Ruhelkhand. On Shuja's agreeing to stand as security for the above sum, Visaji accepted the proposal without consulting Mahadji Sindhia who was for a complete reduction of Ruhelkhand.<sup>16</sup> The wazir took special interest in Zabita in view of his friendship with the latter's deceased father and appealed to Mahadji for releasing the Khan's family from captivity. "The exalted chiefs of the Deccan," wrote Shuja to the Sindhia, "are well known for their chivalry and good conduct (literally temperance in morals), and not only they do not interfere with anybody's family, but rather they extend greater protection to the women of their enemies than to those of their own friends. Whatever hardship they choose to inflict, they inflict it on men only and they never connive at oppression on anyone's women and children. Such being the facts, let it be known to that dear brother (Sindhia) that Zabita Khan is at fault, not his women and children.....Of what use is it then to keep them in prison? In view of this I request the noble chiefs of the Deccan to act upon their laudable tradition of not oppressing the ladies and children and to send them (those captives) to this place (Shahabad), which will enhance the reputation of my dear brother<sup>17</sup> (Sindhia)." The appeal was made at an opportune time when the statesmanlike Sindhia was maturing his policy for stabilising the Delhi government and inspiring

<sup>15</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., May 10, 18, 25, 1772; D. C. 253; S.P.D. XXIX. 271.

<sup>16</sup> S. P. D. XXIX, 276; *Harcharan*, 488a.

<sup>17</sup> *Imad*, 107-108.

confidence in the diverse sections of the Indian population. In pursuance of this scheme he was already in negotiations with Shuja whom he was urging to repair to the capital and assume charge of wizarat in person. He had exchanged turbans with him in recognition of brotherhood, and covered four stages of his journey from Shakartal to the wazir's camp at Shahabad in order to make a personal endeavour to persuade Shuja to accept his proposal.<sup>18</sup> Although he had to cancel his journey and return to the imperial court owing to a dissension with Visaji, he did not give up his friendly relations with the wazir whose mediation for a peace with Zabita he accepted without hesitation, releasing the Khan's women and children and those of his clansmen and restoring him to his paternal estate of Najibabad and Saharanpur.<sup>19</sup>

#### 8. A treaty of alliance between Shuja and the Ruhelas, 13th June, 1772

The most important transaction of the whole episode, the one that eventually led to the results so fatal to the entire Ruhela race in the land, was now entered into by the two principal parties assembled at Shahabad. Almost the whole of Ruhelkhand was still under the Maratha occupation and most of the Ruhela chiefs and their families were still crowded fugitives at Nanakmata in the unhealthy Tarai. Hafiz and Zabita were, therefore, willing to carry to a successful conclusion the negotiations that were proceeding with Shuja, and several days' diplomatic parleys ended in the conclusion on June 13, 1772 of a treaty of defensive and offensive alliance between the Ruhela chiefs on the one hand and Shuja-ud-daulah on the other, which was confirmed and

<sup>18</sup> D. C. p., 252 ; S. P. D. XXIX, 270 and 276.

<sup>19</sup> Harcharan, 487b-488a ; also Gulistan, 98-99 (details wrong). Strachey (*vide Hastings and the Rohila War*, p. 292) mistakenly thinks that there was no agreement between the Marathas and Ruhelas through Shuja's mediation. I agree with him that Gulistan has little historical value ; but the agreement is confirmed by other Persian and Marathi sources which were unknown to Strachey.



sealed in the presence of general Sir Robert Barker. The Ruhela chiefs, represented by Hafiz and Zabita, bound themselves to look upon the wazir's friends as their friends and his enemies as their enemies, to join him to defend Oudh and Ruhelkhand whenever either of them might be attacked by a third power, and to join and unite with him in any measure that might be determined by him for the benefit of Zabita Khan. Shuja agreed to "establish the Rohilla Sirdars in their different possessions, obliging the Marathas to retire either by peace or war; this to depend on the pleasure of the Vizier." If, however, the Marathas at that time retired of their own accord owing to rainy season and returned to Ruhelkhand after the rains were over their expulsion was to be "the business of the Vizier." For the above service the Ruhela chiefs agreed to pay the wazir forty lakhs of rupees, ten of which were to be paid as soon as Shuja had marched beyond Shahabad, as far as was necessary "to enable the families of the Rohillas to leave the jungle, and return to their habitations," and the remaining thirty lakhs in three years, from the beginning of 1180 Fasli.<sup>20</sup>

As the rainy season was about to begin and Visaji had already accepted Shuja's mediation for a peace with the Ruhelas in consideration of forty lakhs to be paid to them, the Marathas made preparations for withdrawal. The Ruhelas' junction with the wazir quickened the Maratha desire to retire as early as possible and they quitted Ruhelkhand even before the treaty of 13th June was signed.

<sup>20</sup> Tr. of the treaty and agreement, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1772 pp. 241-43; Aitchison's Treaties etc., Vol. II (ed. 1892), pp. 5-6. The two translations slightly differ, but their meanings are identical. Barker's statement that the treaty was made 'to-day' (*vide* his letter dated 17th June, 1772), that is, 17th June, seems to be erroneous, as the translation of the treaty enclosed with this very letter by Barker himself, gives 11th Rabi I, 1186 H. as the date of the treaty, which corresponds (according to another calculation to 12th June), to 13th June 1772. 13th June is given by Aitchison's copy too...The same date (11th Rabi I, 1186 H.) is given in another translation of the treaty (see Ben. Sec. Cons., July 23, 1772.)

Therefore, Shuja with Barker started back for Faizabad where he arrived<sup>21</sup> on 15th July, 1772.

#### 9. Barker chiefly responsible for the treaty.

Although Shuja-ud-daulah cannot be absolved from blame, the main responsibility for bringing about the circumstances that led to the treaty of 13th June and for the treaty itself must be ascribed to the deliberate policy and efforts of the English general Barker. In the first place, when on receipt of Hafiz's definite refusal to pay the expenses of the Oudh army or to cede any part of his territory, Shuja was inclined to hold back at Lucknow, Barker on his own confession urged him to proceed to his western frontier and to persevere in his policy of protecting the Ruhelas against the Marathas. And as Shuja would not move beyond Lucknow unless he was attended by an English force, Barker accompanied him and undoubtedly also promised him further help.<sup>22</sup> It was in fulfilment of this promise that he had ordered the first brigade to proceed to join him immediately after learning that Zabita's advance-guard was routed by the Marathas. In the second place, the Ruhelas did not request aid from Shuja alone, but from him and the English conjointly, and hence, as has already been related, they would not have entered into any friendly negotiations with the wazir, had not Barker associated himself with the latter with all the power and prestige that the English name implied. Thirdly, without the Bengal government's permission he sent Harper, more than once, to the Ruhelas in the Tarai to negotiate an alliance between the wazir and the Ruhela chiefs and to persuade the latter to come to Shuja's camp at Shahabad, a task in which Harper scored complete success. As Barker himself admits, no Ruhela chief would have come to the wazir or entered into a treaty with him if Harper had not given assurances to him on

<sup>21</sup> *Harcharan*, 508b.

<sup>22</sup> Barker to Gov. and Council, May 15, 1772.

behalf of the commander-in-chief and if he himself had not been present with Shuja at Shahabad.<sup>23</sup> Fourthly, Shuja's long cherished ambition being the complete subjugation and annexation of Ruhelkhand to Oudh, he would not have entered into the treaty of 13th June, which sought to perpetuate Ruhelkhand as an independent state, precluding the realisation of the wazir's designs, unless, of course, he could anticipate that the Ruhelas would refuse to comply with the terms of that treaty, (and it is too much to think that he could) if Barker had not goaded him into the transaction. Fifthly, but for pressure from Barker, which the general admitted when he explained that one of the main reasons for calling the first brigade was to prevent Shuja's "flighty disposition" from thinking of entering "into improper treaties with the Marathas",<sup>24</sup> Shuja would not have antagonised the mighty Maratha power by undertaking to defend Ruhelkhand from their attack, an undertaking that ran counter to the policy of friendly neutrality towards the Marathas that the wazir had been following for more than ten years. And finally Barker gave a finishing touch to the transaction by witnessing the treaty which was confirmed and sealed in his presence and thereby evincing personal interest in the entire business. The treaty would not have been concluded, as he admitted before the House of Commons, without his agreeing to sign it. He must therefore share with Shuja, and in a much greater degree than the latter, the responsibility of being the author of the treaty the non-fulfilment of the terms of which brought about the destruction of the Ruhela power.

#### **10. Maratha activities ; their demand for Kora and Allahabad**

Informed of the treaty between the Ruhelas and Shuja whereby the latter had undertaken the responsibility of

<sup>23</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., May 10, 1772.

<sup>24</sup> *Vide* Barker's letter of 15th May referred to above.

defending Ruhelkhand from their attack, the Marathas flew into a rage and Tukoji proposed to take steps for the chastisement of the audacious wazir. But Visaji, the Maratha chief commander, was not for open hostilities and wanted a peaceful settlement of the problem. Negotiations were, therefore, begun, soon after the emperor's return to Delhi, with Zabita Khan in order to detach him from his alliance with Shuja and Hafiz Rahmat, and to render the treaty of June 13 a mere scrap of paper. The bait thrown to the Khan was the promise of the imperial pardon for his past conduct and his appointment as chief Bakhshi. Tukoji took upon himself the work of persuading Shah Alam to confer the paymaster-general's post on Zabita, cede Kora and Allahabad to the Marathas and sanction an expedition against Oudh and Bihar. But the emperor, fully aware of the strength of the English, refused to permit such an expedition; nor did he agree to appoint Zabita as his chief Bakhshi. This annoyed the Marathas who were already dissatisfied on account of the emperor's failure to discharge his financial obligation relating to the treaty of 1771, while Shah Alam had a genuine grievance against them for appropriating most of the spoils, especially cash and jewels, during the late campaign in Ruhelkhand. These differences resulted in an open battle between the parties near Purana Qila outside Delhi on 17th December, in which the emperor's troops led by Najaf Khan and Madec were decisively beaten and compelled to retire. Shah Alam had no alternative but to make peace and concede all the Maratha demands, including the elevation of Zabita to chief Bakhshiship and the restoration of his family estate and the cession of Kora and Allahabad districts to the Marathas themselves. An important result of the Maratha victory was the collapse of Najaf's personal contingent, his submission to the victors and his acceptance of service in the Deccani army on a salary of rupees three thousand per day. The Mughal monarch no longer thought it impolitic to give his permission for an invasion of Oudh and Bihar, and immediately after this fresh

peace he ordered Munir, then in charge of Kora and Allahabad districts, to deliver them to the Marathas. The Deccan forces under Visaji and Tukoji now left Delhi and crossed into the Doab on 2nd February, 1773, sending their envoys to the Ruhelas demanding the indemnity promised in January 1771 and to Shuja asking for the cession of Kora and Allahabad.<sup>25</sup>

### 11. Shuja's preparations ; he asks for English help.

Shuja was on his way back to Faizabad after the conclusion of the momentous treaty of 13th June when he first received information of the Maratha intention to return to Ruhelkhand after the rainy season. Conscious of a complete breach for the first time between him and the Marathas, caused by his own policy of taking upon himself the protection of Ruhelkhand, the wazir realised that a struggle with them was inevitable, and hence he gave up once for all the policy of temporising with them, a policy that he had followed ever since his accession to the governorship in 1754 ; and early in July 1772 he wrote<sup>26</sup> to Warren Hastings, who had taken charge of the Presidency of Bengal on April 13 of that year, for assistance in fulfilment of the second article of the treaty of 1765. This letter was followed by numerous others on the subject, informing the governor that the Marathas were demanding the cession of the districts of Kora and Allahabad and of the town of Benares as well as

<sup>25</sup> *Ghulam Ali*, III, 4-18 ; *Khair-ud-din*, 214-22 ; *Miskin*, 283-86 ; *Manna Lal*, 135-43 ; *Mirat-i-Aftab-Numa*, 261-262b ; *Mutakherin*, 211a-212a ; *Champion to Ben. Sel. Com.*, Dumnapur, 20th February, 1773 : C. P. C., IV. 122, 128, 138, 224, 225 ; *Madec*, 38-40 ; *Sarkar*, F. M. E., III, 67-77.

<sup>26</sup> Dr. C. C. Davies, *vide* his " *W. Hastings and Oudh* ", p. 19, says that this letter reached Hastings on the very day (17th June, according to him) on which the treaty between Shuja and the Ruhelas was signed. Now, the treaty was signed on 13th June as I have shown (F. N. 20) and this letter of Shuja reached Hastings on 17th July and not 17th June. For the correct date see Ben. Sel. Com., Progs. 1772, pp. 244-47 and also C. P. C., IV. 55.



the surrender of his claims on the Ruhelas (the assignment of forty lakhs), and requesting him to send Barker with a powerful force to join him, as he was determined to put an end to the Maratha menace once for all. The wazir pleaded that Oudh being "the gate of Bengal" and he a barrier to the Maratha advance, the interests of the two governments were identical and it was therefore advisable for the Bengal council to formulate a regular scheme of action and for the governor to move to Patna so as to be near the scene of action and to exert pressure on the enemy.<sup>27</sup> We do not know whether the Marathas had really made the above demands from Shuja *as early as July 1772*, for there is no recorded evidence except the wazir's letters to Hastings on the point, and our suspicion is heightened by the fact that he reported to the English governor a little later that the Marathas had invited Mir Qasim and Samru to join them<sup>28</sup> —reports that had no foundation in fact and were made in order to persuade the English to believe that it was necessary in their own interests to co-operate with him to end the Maratha menace once for all. Be it as it may, Shuja continued referring to these demands and appealing for help till Champion was sent with a brigade and after that pressing for Barker's presence on his frontier until that request was also complied with.<sup>29</sup>

So far as his own preparations were concerned, Shuja did not spare pains to make them as thorough and efficient as he could. Even before the rainy season was over he mobilised his forces and about the middle of September despatched two of his battalions towards his western frontier, ordering others to keep themselves in readiness for marching.

<sup>27</sup> C.P.C., IV. 55, 59, 60, 85, 94, 119, 121, 122; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1772, pp. 244-47, 261-63; Ben. Sec. Cons., July 23, 1772; Shuja to Hastings (received on 28th September), *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., September 30, 1772.

<sup>28</sup> C. P. C., IV. 128.

<sup>29</sup> C. P. C., IV. 148, 169, 178; trans. of Shuja's letter, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1772, 261-62.

The rendezvous for the troops was fixed at Bangarmau where the wazir was to join them, and a little later a military camp was established at a distance of 10 miles from Faizabad and Shuja spent much of his time there, supervising the training of troops and getting together other materials of war.<sup>30</sup> Negotiations were opened with Najaf Khan and Madec and also with Zabita Khan who promised to desert the Marathas and join the wazir as soon as the latter's army had approached near.<sup>31</sup>

## 12. The English attitude ; Hastings eventually sends help.

For full three months (July-September) Hastings refused to agree to assist in what he termed "an offensive war", as the company was bound to aid him only for the defence of his territory, whereas he wanted the Bengal government "to help him out of a situation that he has himself created" by undertaking the responsibility of defending Ruhelkhand from the Marathas. He was, however, not against providing the wazir help for the defence of his dominions. In a minute delivered on 30th September he said that he was afraid that the company might be drawn into a war with the Marathas, and he agreed to allow the troops to proceed from their cantonments provided that they did not cross the boundary of Bihar till the court of directors' sanction had been obtained. But when Harper's report of 6th October containing the disquieting news that Zabita<sup>32</sup> was on his way to join the Marathas and that his example might be followed by other Ruhela chiefs reached Calcutta and Shuja repeatedly

<sup>30</sup> Harper to Ben. Sel. Com., December 1772.

<sup>31</sup> Champion to Hastings, January 28, 1773, *vide Soldiering in India*, 106 ; C. P. C., IV. 172, 183.

<sup>32</sup> Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, p. 64, wrongly holds that Zabita openly joined the Marathas in July 1772. He seems to believe that Shuja asked for English help after Zabita's defection, which too is incorrect.

urged the despatch of an English army under Barker, the committee resolved on 29th October to comply with the wazir's request for an immediate help in case of an emergency. It was, however, understood that this help was for the protection of Oudh and on 16th November colonel Alexander Champion, commander of the first brigade, was directed to proceed to join Shuja with his troops in defence of his dominions, but he was warned not to carry operations beyond the wazir's territory. Commencing his journey from Dinapore on 5th December, Champion entered Faizabad on 1st January, 1773, after having been received by the wazir six miles in advance, from his capital. He left Shuja's camp outside Faizabad on the 7th, reached Lucknow on the 12th and was joined by the nawab on the 27th at Mohan on the road to his western frontier. Even before he had received news of the imperial grant of Kora and Allahabad, Shuja requested Champion to join him, cross the Ganges and wage an offensive war against the Marathas, if the latter attempted to march towards Kora, and when he learnt that Shah Alam had granted a rescript for the above districts to the Marathas, he expressed alarm "at the cession which he represents as an immediate step to an invasion of his territories and declares that he has a certain knowledge that such is their (Maratha) intention." The Bengal government, therefore, decided (1st February) to take immediate measures for the defence of the districts and authorised Champion to proceed to their western boundary and wait there for further orders ; but he was directed not to cross the boundary of Kora on any account or provocation. These orders reached Champion on 18th February in his camp, 2 miles north-west of Sandi (which is 32 miles N. W. of Bangarmau) where the allied troops had arrived two days before and made Shuja, who was expecting the English army would soon cross the Ganges, unhappy.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> C. P. C., IV. 60, 84, 94, 186 ; Hastings to Shuja 17th July 1772, Ben. Sel. Com. Progs. of 1772, pp. 247-50 ; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., September 30, October 29, 1772 ; Ben. Sec. Cons. ; November 16, 1772 ; February 1, 1773 ; *Soldiering in India*, pp. 97-112.

### 13. The Ramghat expedition ; the Marathas driven out of Ruhelkhand.

Despite the committee's instructions to the contrary Shuja and Champion kept on marching in a north-westerly direction beyond the Oudh frontier and on 3rd March arrived near the Ganges opposite Farrukhabad and met Muzaffar Jang, son of Ahmad Khan Bangash, whom they won over to their side. General Barker with some more troops joined the army at Gauria (on the left bank of the Ram Ganga and 9 m. S.E. of Fatehgarh) on the 5th. The entire army crossed that river on the 7th and proceeding in a north-westerly direction through the fertile plain between the Ram Ganga and the Ganges, *via* Usehat, Qadir Chauk, etc., reached Sahaswan on the 19th, just 20 miles south-east of Ramghat (on the right-bank of the Ganges) where the Marathas were encamped. Having crossed into the Doab, the invaders, accompanied by Zabita and Najaf, had arrived at Ramghat on 15th February with the object of peacefully realising the indemnity from the Ruhelas and occupying Kora and Allahabad ; but in view of the allied advance beyond Shuja's frontier Tukoji had crossed the river (19th March), defeated Ahmad Khan, son of Sardar Khan Ruhela, who was entrenched on the left bank of the river opposite Ramghat. The loud reports of Tukoji's guns during the night of the 19th, heard by the English at Sahaswan, convinced Barker that the Marathas had crossed the river, and hence the entire allied army was up in arms at 2 in the morning of the 20th and on its march towards Ramghat at half-past two. At ten the Marathas having come in sight the troops formed the line, and kept on marching in battle order till they reached the Ganges opposite to Ramghat. Before the near approach of the English Tukoji rapidly retreated northwards and by forced marches arrived near Bisauli and began plundering the country. Being ignorant of his movements, the English thought that he had crossed back to Ramghat. The Marathas under Visaji at Ramghat

opened fire from the opposite bank without doing practically any damage to the English. But when Barker's men commenced firing two 12-pounders, the whole of the Maratha army withdrew from the shore near Ramghat in confusion. For two days the allies remained encamped at the eastern bank of the river, and in consultation with Shuja a plan was drawn up by Barker to cross the Ganges on the 22nd. Accordingly the wazir despatched<sup>34</sup> during the night following 21st about 4000 Najib infantry under Mahbub Ali Khan and 1500 horse across the river to occupy a strategic post on the west bank, and when early in the morning on the 22nd the English prepared to cross the Ganges at the Ramghat ford in violation of the Bengal government's positive instructions, Shuja sent ahead twenty pieces of cannon to cover their march. The Marathas under Visaji had, however, already retreated precipitately some fourteen miles from the river bank, leaving behind some Pindaries who were bold enough to ride full speed through the gaps in the English line and the rear guard of the grenadiers. Barker rode about eight miles at the head of two battalions and 8 guns, but returned to Ramghat in the afternoon without finding the enemy. Here on 23rd Hafiz Rahmat, who had hitherto temporised with both the parties without agreeing to join any, saw Barker, and on the 24th the English troops recrossed to their former encampment on the east bank, while Shuja's men—5500 troops and 8 guns—under Mahbub Ali remained on the opposite bank to guard the ford. On that very day the English learnt that Tukoji had plundered Sambhal and Bisauli and, therefore, Hafiz was asked to

<sup>34</sup> On 21st March when Shuja proposed that the English troops should cross the Ganges to Ramghat and fight the Marathas, Barker humorously remarked, "When your Excellency depends upon our force for fighting a war, why does your Excellency then maintain so many well-equipped troops?" This gave offence to Shuja who ordered Mahbub Ali to cross the river during the night. The English followed him the next morning. *Khair-ud-din*, p. 224.



proceed quickly to keep the Marathas in play till the arrival of the English army, while Barker, accompanied by Shuja, started towards Bisauli on the 25th, but before they could reach there, news came that Tukoji had plundered some villages and laid Moradabad under contribution. The allies then turned towards the latter town when they heard that Tukoji had crossed the Ganges with an immense booty at Puth, about 50 miles above Ramghat, to rejoin Visaji. Therefore after a day's halt, they returned to Ramghat where Visaji's men had attempted to cross the ford one day before (27th), but he had been repulsed by the wazir's troops under Mahbub Ali. On the 28th on the return of the allied troops to Ramghat, the Marathas again retreated about 28 miles off. The allies halted on the east bank of the Ganges opposite Ramghat from 29th March to 13th April, and the Maratha commander-in-chief Visaji after holding Tukoji responsible for commencing hostilities against the English, which the latter repudiated, made preparation for departure for the Deccan.<sup>35</sup> This was destined to be the last Maratha invasion of Ruhelkand.

#### 14. The Ramghat expedition not really undertaken for defence of Kora.

It is not difficult to observe on the face of the above narrative that the Ramghat expedition was not organised for the defence of Kora or Oudh, for which purpose alone the English troops had been despatched by Hastings and the select committee of Bengal. Of the two men Shuja and Barker responsible for organising and executing it, the former, aware of the weakness of the Marathas, most certainly was from the very beginning for an offensive war against them,

<sup>35</sup> Barker to Hastings and Council, March 23, 24, 26, 28 and April, 4, 13, 1773; *Soldiering in India*, 117-124; C. P. C., IV. 251; S.P.D., XXIX. 278 and pp. 331-333, 341 and 348; D.C., 267-268; *Khair-ud-din*, 221-225; *Harcharan*, 511b-512a; *Miral*, 262b; *Miskin*, 287-288; *Ghulam Ali*, III, 18-19; *Manna Lal*, 144-145, *Imad*, 110-111;—(details wrong), *Gulistan*, 108-109; Sarkar *F.M.E.*, III. 80-83.

as is clear from his correspondence with Hastings which has already been noticed in the preceding pages. His intentions and policy become clearer from another letter written a few days before the skirmish at Ramghat. Knowing Hastings' predilection for money he wrote to him early in March, just after Barker had joined him at Gauria, that although the treaty of 1765 required that he should pay the *batta* (extraordinary expenses) of the English troops sent for his assistance, he was now resolved to pay them all their expenses, ordinary and extraordinary, if they "*assist him in fighting the Marathas and allow the brigade to accompany him when he goes to Delhi or elsewhere.*" He also agreed to take upon himself the payment of the Bengal tribute to Shah Alam and requested Hastings to allow Barker to take up the offensive, as it was "impolitic," he added, "to give them (Marathas) time to increase in strength, for then the present opportunity of punishing them will be lost."<sup>36</sup> And it is interesting to note that before receiving any reply to the above letter from the governor, the allied troops marched against the Marathas, crossed the Ganges and proceeded in pursuit of them eight miles further west of the enemy's former encampment, no doubt because he had meanwhile succeeded in persuading Barker to take these steps immediately.

As regards the English commander-in-chief, his despatches, when examined critically not only show that the action that he took was unprovoked and unnecessary, but also open him to the charge of exaggeration and self-contradiction. He maintained that the Maratha army was formidable and consisted of not less than 50,000 troops, that there was a real danger from them and that but for the timely movement of the English troops, they would have crossed the Ganges, devastated Ruhelkhand and even invaded Oudh and Kora,—views that have been uncritically

<sup>36</sup> C.P.C., IV. 230. The wazir added: "There goes a saying that 'the source of a spring may be choked with a clod, but if it is allowed to flow, it would be difficult to cross it even on an elephant.' It appears to him that this is the proper time for operations, for an opportunity like this will not happen again."

accepted by Sir John Strachey<sup>37</sup> as facts. Now we know it for certain that the Maratha army was about 30,000 strong, half of its former strength, according to Munir as 10,000 troops under Mahadji Sindhia, had parted company with their main division before December 1772 and 5,000 under Shivaji Vithal were deputed to Gwalior to suppress a local rebellion there. Even Champion and Mackpherson, then present with Barker, did not estimate the total Maratha strength at more than 31,000 men in all, 15,000 under Tukoji and 16,000 under Visaji.<sup>38</sup> Far from being formidable the Maratha force was not even strong enough to defend itself against the allies, as it was torn by dissensions between its chiefs, Visaji who was for a peaceful settlement of their dispute with the Ruhelas and Shuja, and Tukoji who advocated the policy of a bold military stroke, and because of the treacherous collusion of their allies Zabita and Najaf with the enemy.<sup>39</sup> "The army that now remains under the command of Visaji and Tukoji," wrote Munir who was present with the allies early in March, "*is so much dispirited that these commanders have several times thought of returning to the Deccan.*" He believed that "*owing to lack of sufficient force*" the Marathas, "*are not in a position to fight a pitched battle with the combined forces of the Company and the Vizier*" and all they could do was to desolate the country.<sup>40</sup> Obviously there could be no danger from such a force to Oudh and Kora which maintained much numerically superior and scientifically trained troops armed with European guns. On the contrary it was likely to fall an easy prey to the allies' onslaught and that is

<sup>37</sup> Barker to Hastings, March 10, 1773; *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 69 and 76. The Ben. Com's. to C.D., dated March 31, 1773, was based on Barker's above report.

<sup>38</sup> *Soldiering in India*, pp. 119 and 120; C.P.C. IV. 225.

<sup>39</sup> C.P.C., IV. 172, 183; *Soldiering in India*, pp. 123-124.

<sup>40</sup> C.P.C., IV. 225. Hastings too believed that the Marathas were weak and were sure to be defeated by his troops. See his letters to John Purling, 31/3/1773 and to Josias Dupre on 9th March, 1773, *vide Gleig*, I. 291 and 303.

what Shuja meant when he wrote to Hastings that such an opportunity was not likely to occur again. Hastings himself fully shared that opinion. Barker's claim of 10th March that the movement of the English troops had prevented the Marathas from crossing the river was falsified on the 19th when Tukoji with 15,000 men forded the Ganges owing to the hostile approach of the allied forces. And the English general seems to have forgotten that despite a similar march of the British troops and a similar boast the Marathas had just one year before (23rd Feb. 1772) crossed the Ganges south of Hardwar, put Zabita to flight and ravaged the whole of Ruhelkhand, although the combined forces of the English and Shuja under Barker himself had arrived at Bangarmau on 28th February, 1772. In the present case the Marathas had arrived at Ramghat on 15th February 1773, just a day after the allies' arrived at Bangarmau (14th Feb. 1773) and it is inconceivable how they could have been prevented from crossing the river had they the requisite strength to do it, when it is remembered that they had practically the same start over the allies as they had in 1772. It is therefore ridiculous to say, as Barker did that the Marathas were formidable, and hostile and yet they were prevented from crossing the river, because of the distant movement of the English troops.

To argue that Shuja's policy was to protect the Ruhelas in fulfilment of the obligation imposed upon him by the treaty of 13th June, 1773 and that was why Hastings despatched troops to assist him, as Strachey seems to do, is to ignore the fact that the treaty was no longer binding upon the wazir, as Zabita, the next most important Ruhela chief associated with the treaty, had long before joined the Marathas, and Hafiz and other Ruhelas maintained a dubious attitude and did not even meet the wazir till after the Marathas were driven from Ramghat. Nor is the plea of the necessity of preventing the Ruhelas from joining the Marathas and making a joint attack on Oudh tenable, for the Ruhelas were equally aware of the Maratha weakness and therefore although the invader had been lying at Ramghat for more than a month, and using all

the diplomacy and threat at his command, they had showed absolutely no disposition to ally with him. Hastings himself does not seem to have had really any apprehension of that contingency, although he referred to it in a despatch to the court of directors, otherwise he would not have issued pre-emptory instructions to Barker not to begin any operation for Shuja's defence and to abandon him at once and withdraw all the troops of the company from his territory, if he did not agree to pay their expenses at the rate prescribed by the committee. "It is further the determination of the Board," Barker was told, "of which you will take particular notice that no operation for the Vizier's defence shall be carried into execution without a previous stipulation on his part for the extraordinary charge attending the succours we afford him. We have estimated this at Rs. 115,000 (per brigade) per month, and have required an assignment on his revenue for the amount. You will, therefore, as a preliminary, demand and receive the assignment required by us; and in case an additional force should be hereafter called for on his requisition you are, previous to their march, to require also and receive a proportionable assignment for the extra expenses on that account. *If, in either case, the Vizier should refuse complying with these requisitions in their fullest extent, and shall persist in the refusal, it is our positive command that you will immediately abandon him and withdraw your whole force from his territory, either employing it, if needful, in the Kora province agreeable to the instructions hereafter given, or remanding to Bihar such part of it as shall exceed the exigencies of that service.*"<sup>41</sup> This long quotation has been given to show that the Calcutta authorities did not much believe in the danger theory and that money played an important part in determining their policy in regard to the Ramghat expedition.

Finally one cannot help noting that for some unrecorded reasons (certainly not those given by him in his despatches)

<sup>41</sup> Ben. Govt.'s instructions to Barker, 18th Feb. 1773, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., Feb. 18, 1773, Vol. of 1773, pp. 124-134.



Barker had so much sympathy with Shuja's ambitious policy towards the Ruhelas as well as the Marathas that he practically acted as a tool in the wazir's hands and in compliance with his request crossed the Ganges, which was considered unnecessary even by the committee except in defence of Kora. Thus he violated the Bengal government's positive orders for which he earned their censure. It is worthy of mention that the English general had thought it fit to disregard the committee's clear and strict instructions not in an attempt to avert a sure danger, but, as Sir John Strachey admits, after it had become "clear that the Marathas had no inclination of risking an encounter with the English."<sup>42</sup>

#### 15. Peace with the Marathas ; Shuja returns to Faizabad.

Being thus completely outwitted the Marathas saw no way but to sue for peace, sending two envoys who arrived at the wazir's camp on 19th April and were introduced to Barker on the 21st. On Shuja's promise that he would take two bonds, one for fifteen lakhs of rupees from Hafiz and the other for five lakhs from Muzaffar Jang Bangash and deliver them to the Marathas, the envoys returned to their camp on the 30th. The invaders, who had already buried their heavy guns near Etawah and sent their booty ahead, considered Shuja's assurance satisfactory and being consoled by two lakhs as ransom for the release of Ahmad Khan Bakhshi left for the Deccan on 5th May, and Najaf after seeing Shuja and Barker near Anupshahr returned to Delhi.<sup>43</sup>

The wazir had taken mortal offence at Hafiz's dubious conduct during the Ramghat expedition ; but his feelings were partly "assuaged" when the Ruhela chief waited on

<sup>42</sup> *Hastings and the Rohila War*, p. 78.

<sup>43</sup> C. P. C., IV. 314 ; D. C., 269 ; *Soldiering in India*, 124-126 ; *Miskin*, 286-88 ; *Genkil*, 277 and 283. *Siyyar*, p. 934 and *Imad*, p. 111 confuse Ramghat expedition with that of 1772 ; but they rightly say that Shuja brought about peace between the Marathas and the Ruhelas. *Gulistan*, 108-110, is full of deliberate lies.

him on 23rd March and promised in Barker's presence to discharge the financial obligation imposed on him by the previous year's treaty. It was because of this definite promise that the allied troops had taken quick steps to relieve the northern portion of Ruhelkhand from the ravages of Tukoji and chase him out of that country. But when Ruhelkhand was freed from danger and the Marathas had retreated towards the Deccan, he put off payment on one pretext or another and before the middle of May it became clear that he was not inclined to pay. He thought that the allied policy was the preservation and maintenance of Ruhelkhand as a buffer state between the Marathas and Oudh and their operations were undertaken as much for the safety of Oudh as of Ruhelkhand. Barkar was convinced that nothing short of threat to employ force would compel the Ruhelas to fulfil their obligation. But as he was not authorised to hold out any such threat, the money remained unpaid, and the allied forces began their return march towards Oudh on 12th May.<sup>44</sup>

#### 16. Shuja asks for English help against the Ruhelas.

As early as March 16 Shuja had revealed to Barker his desire of expelling the Ruhela chiefs and annexing Ruhelkhand to Oudh, as Hafiz and his clansmen had followed the policy of sitting on the fence and had avoided joining the allies who were then only a few stages from the Maratha encampment at Ramghat. The wazir had then made an offer of fifty lakhs and the permanent remission of the Bengal tribute if the English agreed to assist him, and had proposed that the terms should finally be settled and confirmed in a personal interview between him and Hastings. Hastings was already in full sympathy with the scheme, and although he did not commit himself, he wrote in a private letter to Sir George Colebrooke that "it would be a

<sup>44</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., March 24, April 13 and May 10, 18, 20, 1778; *Soldiering in India*, 126.

complete addition to his (Shuja's) dominions, and the hostile part which the Rohillas have taken against him would justify the measure."<sup>45</sup> Shuja's suspicion was not altogether allayed even after Hafiz had joined the allies and on 24th March he promised Barker to pay to the English twenty lakhs of rupees, if the Ruhelas delivered to him the stipulated forty lakhs, but in default of their clearing off the promised sum, he would pay fifty lakhs to the company for its aid to put him in possession of Ruhelkhand. The wazir the same day wrote direct to Hastings that "should the Rohilla *sirdars* be guilty of a breach of their agreement, and the English gentlemen will *thoroughly exterminate them* and settle me in their country, I will in that case pay them fifty lakhs of rupees in ready money, and besides exempt them from paying any tribute to the king out of the Bengal revenues." Eager to accept the tempting offer Hastings got the proposal of an interview with the wazir approved of by the select committee on 15th April and by the whole council on the 19th and three days later he wrote to Shuja in these words, "It is true that I have long thought the junction of the Rohilla country with yours, either by a sure and permanent obligation of friendship, or by reducing them to obedience if they should render such an attempt justifiable by any act of enmity or treachery, would be an advisable point for you to attain, because by that means the defensive line of your dominions would be completed by including within it all the land lying on that side the river Ganges, and you will be in no danger from an attack on that quarter....." Although he referred to grave risks and enormous expenditure that were likely to attend the expedition; the letter was so cleverly drafted as to encourage the wazir to undertake it. He approved of the idea of a personal conference at Benares and wrote that he would leave Calcutta on receiving the wazir's reply, hinting that

<sup>45</sup> Hastings to Colebrooke, March, 26, 1772 (*vide Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 59-62) and April 3, 1773 (*vide Warren Hastings by Gleig*, Vol. I. p. 310).

he was not likely to be free for several months, if Shuja did not avail himself of the governor's present leisure. The wazir liked nothing better. He sent an immediate answer, agreeing to meet him at Benares.<sup>46</sup>

### 17. The Benares Conference and Treaty, August-September, 1773.

Shuja's letter was received at Calcutta on 9th June and Hastings started for Benares on the 24th, after the council had invested him with the powers of a plenipotentiary. Travelling in the thick of the rainy season and surmounting great natural obstacles he arrived at Benares on 19th August, where he was received four miles in advance by Shuja who had left his capital on 6th August on learning that the governor had already reached Patna. The wazir had come to the sacred town probably a day before, meeting on the way difficulties—heavy rain, muddy and flooded roads and swollen rivers—similar to those of Hastings. Two or three days were taken up in visits of ceremony and then a conference was held between the two personages from which even the English commander-in-chief (Barker) was excluded. Shuja's natural intelligence and power of quickly grasping the essentials of an intricate

<sup>46</sup> Barker to Hastings, March 16, 1773, *vide Hastings and the Rohilla War*, p. 79; Barker to Hastings and Council, March 24, 1773; Fifth Report, App. No. 21; Hastings to Barker, April 20, 1773, *vide Hastings and Rohilla War*, p. 81; Hastings and Council to Barker, April 25, 1773; Ben Sec. Cons., April 19, 1773; Hastings to Shuja, April 22, 1773; Shuja to Hastings, *vide Ben. Sec. Cons. of 1773*, pp. 350-51; C. P. C., IV 267, 352.

According to *Imad* (pp. 111-114), *Bakwant* (Bankipore MS. pp. 40a-42a), *Benares* by Ghulam Hussain (p. 151) and *T. Muhtashim* (p. 70b) Hafiz, had sent to Hastings Shuja's letter to the Ruhela chiefs, written before the treaty of Allahabad, requesting their help in a campaign against the English, after altering the date of the letter from 1179 H. to 1186 H. Munir is said to have been responsible for it. This was one of the causes of the Benares conference. Hastings was satisfied that the date of the letter was forged.

problem and Hastings' knowledge of Persian and Hindustani made it possible for them to have a frank and free discussion and to transact highly important political business without the assistance of an interpreter. The foremost question that engaged their attention, after the usual preliminaries, was the wazir's proposal regarding Ruhelkhand. Hafiz Rahmat had sent a representation charging Shuja and Barker with violation of the treaty of June 13th, 1772 by returning to Oudh and leaving the Ruhelas at the mercy of the Marathas who were, he alleged, ready before the arrival of the allied forces, to make peace with him, if he allowed them passage through Ruhelkhand for invading Oudh. These allegations being undoubtedly false did not influence Hastings who pledged his word for assisting the wazir with English troops in the complete subjugation of Ruhelkhand. It was only after Hastings had given word that Shuja agreed to consider those questions which were vital in the eyes of the governor, and the result of days' discussion was the treaty of 7th September, 1773. This treaty consisted of two provisions, firstly that the company sold to Shuja the districts of Kora and Allahabad for fifty lakhs of *sikkāh* rupees, twenty lakhs of which were to be paid immediately in ready money and the remaining in two years (that is, by September 1775) by two instalments of fifteen lakhs each; and secondly that the wazir promised to pay all the expenses, and not merely extraordinary ones, of the company's troops sent thereafter to his assistance at his requisition at the rate of rupees 2,10,000 per brigade per month. A brigade was to consist of two battalions of Europeans, six battalions of sepoys and one company of artillery. It was laid down that the aforesaid expenses should always be calculated from the day the troops entered Shuja's territory up to the day they returned to the boundary of the company's dominions, and that the exclusive of the above sum no more money on any account would ever be demanded from the wazir. It was also agreed that if the company required the assistance of the wazir's troops the English "shall also pay their



expenses in the like manner."<sup>47</sup>

Besides the above, the conference arrived at certain other important decisions which, though not included in the above treaty, were yet of far-reaching consequences. They were: Firstly, as already mentioned, Hastings promised to assist Shuja in conquering Ruhelkhand. Secondly, Hastings cancelled the treaty of 1768 with the wazir and allowed Shuja to have as many troops in his service as he liked.<sup>48</sup> Thirdly, Shuja agreed to receive an English gentleman in Hastings' confidence to reside at his court, and he became political resident in Oudh. Fourthly, at the request of Hastings and much against his will Shuja, who unjustly held that the article fifth of the treaty of 1765 was limited to Balwant's life, confirmed Chait Singh and his heirs in his late father's state by a special agreement dated September 6, 1773. Fifthly, Shuja having declined to accept the governor's request to establish free trade between Oudh and Bengal and to introduce in his territories customs regulations similar to those recently provided in Bengal on the ground that such a trade would cause drainage of specie from Oudh and would lead to a friction between the two governments, Hastings made an agreement with Chait Singh who permitted broad cloth, copper and lead sold by the company to pass duty free to Mirzapur which was then the chief mart for supplying Bengal goods to central and western Hindustan. Sixthly, Hastings decided not to pay any

<sup>47</sup> C.P.C., IV. 374, 392, 395, 403, 418, 421, 436, 437, 440, 475; *Soldiering in India*, 138; Hastings to Council, Aug. 19 and Sept. 7, 1773; Aitchison, *Treaties, etc.*, II. 76-77; Ben. Sec. Cons., Vol. IX. (of 1773), pp. 563-567; *Gentil*, 278-280. For Hafiz Rahmat's representation Sec. C.P.C. IV. 481 and Ben. Sec. Cons., 1773, pp. 581-85 and Shuja's narrative pp. 586-90 and C. P. C. IV. 475.

It is worthy of note that the extraordinary expenses of English troops per brigade per month were originally fixed at Rs. 30,000 in Clive's time (1765-67). They were increased to Rs. 1,15,000 in 1772 by Hastings who further raised them to Rs. 210,000 in Sept. 1773. (See Hastings' letter to Colebrooke, Oct. 12, 1773, *vide Gheig*, I. p. 353.)

<sup>48</sup> C.P.C., IV. 507 and 508; *Gentil*, 278.

tribute to Shah Alam; but as the wazir argued that he had advanced some money to the emperor on English security, Hastings promised to pay him Rs. 323,000 out of the arrears of the tribute and the sum was deducted from Shuja's obligation on account of the expenses of the English troops during December 1772-September 1773. Finally Hastings sought to undermine Shah Alam's exclusive right to sovereignty of India by persuading Shuja to assume the title of king, and although he refused to set himself up openly as an independent ruler, Hastings' object was partially achieved when the nawab agreed to act as wazir in India of the English King George III and to strike coins in the latter's name.<sup>49</sup>

### 18. Criticism of the transactions.

Three of the above transactions, namely, the sale of Kora and Allahabad, the stoppage of the tribute and the promise of military aid in the reduction of Ruhelkhand, require more than a passing notice. It may at once be conceded that all the three transactions brought immense money for the company and that the first and the third strengthened the English alliance with Shuja, gave him a natural frontier, made him more dependent on the company and rendered an alliance between him and the Marathas impossible. It is also true that the continuity of the company's territory in eastern India, which would have been marred by the annexation of Kora and Allahabad, remained intact because of the aforesaid sale, and that the expenditure of the English army was reduced by one-third (as one brigade was almost permanently lent to Shuja)

<sup>49</sup> C.P.C., IV. 485-490, 507, 508; Ben. Sec. Cons., Oct. 4, 1773; Tr. of the agreement with Chait Singh and tr. of the *Patta* given by Shuja, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., 1773, pp. 568-570; *Balwant*, 128-30. Shuja meted out bad treatment to Chait Singh, as the latter showed preference in his attention to Hastings. (See *Soldiering in India*, p. 144 and *T. Benares*, p. 115b). *Gentil*, 281.

"even in employing it," as Hastings put it. But none of the transactions was based on principles of equity and justice, and Hastings' laboured defence cannot commend itself to those who possess a detailed knowledge of the history of that epoch. Hastings denied Barker's charge that the sale of Kora and Allahabad involved breach of a solemn agreement and maintained that Shah Alam was an "idol of our (English) creation" and that "His title, dignity and state, and the territory which he possesses, he holds by our (English) bounty....." These claims were not only extravagant and misleading but also betrayed either insincerity or ignorance on the part of Hastings of the circumstances that brought about an alliance between the emperor and his nation. It was the pressure of necessity and self-interest and not altruistic generosity that prompted the English to wean Shah Alam from his wazir, and not only Kora and Allahabad but the entire<sup>50</sup> territory of Shuja-ud-daulah were solemnly given to the emperor by an agreement as the price of the Mughal sovereign's moral, political and even military assistance to the company in its war with the wazir during 1764-1765. The curious reader is referred to the details in the first volume (pp. 256-258) and chapter X of this volume, which show that though this solemn agreement was in part violated by Clive there is no iota of fact to substantiate Hastings' boast.<sup>51</sup> As regards the tribute of 26 lakhs, Clive himself admitted that it was given in order to obtain the *diwāni*. "I think twenty sufficient," wrote he to Sykes on the eve of the treaty of Allahabad. "*However as we intend making use of His Majesty in a very extraordinary manner for obtaining nothing less than a sunnud for*

<sup>50</sup> For this treaty see Ben. Sec. Cons., Dec. 6, 1764 (*vide* Vol. II. pp. 751-752). The King's *Farman*, fulfilling his part of the agreement, is dated 4th Rajab of 6th year of the reign, *vide*, Ben. Sec. Cons., 7th January, 1765. Also see Spencer and Council to C. D., 3rd January 1765, I. O. R., 1765, pp. 1-5.

<sup>51</sup> Dr. Davies (*Hastings and Oudh*, p. 37), was misled because this treaty is not given in Aitchison's collections. But this does not mean that it was not entered into by the parties.

*all the revenues of the country, six lacks of rupees will be scarce worth our disobliging the King, if he should make a point of it.*<sup>52</sup> Thus Shah Alam possessed an inalienable right to Kora and Allahabad and to the tribute from Bengal both as an unchallenged, though titular, sovereign of the country and in virtue of a solemn agreement with the Bengal government. To argue, as Hastings did, that the emperor forfeited his claim to the districts and the tribute when he left the English protection at Allahabad is to ignore unconsciously or perhaps deliberately the fact that these were not given as a condition to his staying at Allahabad. That there was no such understanding is borne out by the fact that as early as August 1765 Clive promised to escort the emperor to Delhi after the rains, a promise that was repeated successively by Verelst and Cartier, but never fulfilled. Therefore Hastings uttered a palpable falsehood when he said that Shah Alam had "ungratefully deserted and since headed armies against us" and that "by the terms of the treaty (of Allahabad) he was under obligation to us rather than we to him." Far from heading armies Shah Alam had resisted the Maratha demand for the cession of the districts till his troops had been utterly defeated and he was at their mercy. The obligations were mutual and the benefits from Shah Alam's stay at Allahabad immense to the English and that was why they made frantic efforts to prevent him from leaving. Dr. Davies quotes Hastings' remarks that "The sword which gave us the dominion of Bengal must be the instrument of its preservation,"..... and agrees with him that "the Emperor's sanads and grants were useless."<sup>53</sup> That was surely so in 1772 or 1773 but not in 1757 and much less in 1764-1765 when their position was precarious indeed. And Hastings could not have a better claim to judge whether sword alone was responsible for the dominions of Bengal than Clive who wielded the sword during that

<sup>52</sup> Clive to Sykes, Benares, 3rd Aug. 1765, *vide* Forrest's *Clive*, Vol. II. pp. 281-282.

<sup>53</sup> *W. Hastings and Oudh*, p. 38.

epoch and who wrote to Orme in 1757 with the frankness of a soldier that in the history of the occupation of Bengal he would find a combination of "fighting, tricks, chicanery, intrigues, politics and the Lord knows what."<sup>54</sup> Human memory is proverbially short; but perhaps nowhere has this limitation been so much responsible for distortion of facts as in Hastings' defence of the aforesaid measures.

Hastings' policy, though strongly condemned by his countrymen of the 18th and 19th centuries, has been defended by the English historians of our generation on the ground that the continuance of the tribute would have meant putting money into Maratha hands and allowing the emperor to retain possession of Kora and Allahabad would have meant the cession of the districts to them. But they forget that the Marathas had quitted northern India in May 1773, while Hastings stopped the tribute and sold the districts on 7th September of that year when the Maratha menace had disappeared at least for a year and there was no fear of the tribute and the territory passing into their hands during that period. Had not some other reason been responsible for Hastings' decision, he would have waited till the news of the Maratha *preparations to return* to northern India, if not till that of their actual start, and would also have given Shah Alam a previous warning before making the final settlement. The emperor was requested to send a representative to the conference, but he was kept altogether in the dark about the agenda and he did not know that the sale of the districts and the stoppage of the tribute were in contemplation. It is worthy of note that although Hastings took credit for frankness and plain-dealing with the emperor, he never really informed<sup>55</sup> him officially or unofficially that the tribute had been stopped

<sup>54</sup> Clive to Orme, Murshidabad, 1st August, 1757, quoted in Forrest's *Clive*, Vol. II. p. 34.

<sup>55</sup> Shah Alam did not know till long after the Benares meeting that the tribute was for ever stopped and the district were sold away. See C.P.C., IV. 870, 921.



forever and the districts sold off for a sum of money. What he wrote was that owing to a famine in Bengal it was not possible to pay anything of the tribute *till the misery lasted*, and that the districts were given to Shuja "your first servant and the only representative of your person" and "it will enable him hereafter more effectually to serve your Majesty and to retrieve your affairs."<sup>56</sup> Nor did he take Shuja into confidence, as the latter's numerous letters reporting his efforts to secure the remission of the Bengal tribute betray his ignorance of Hastings' decision. Nay, he encouraged the wazir to secure a formal remission and he even applied to Shah Alam, whose farmans he ridiculed in his despatches to the English world as of no value, for passing orders to that effect.<sup>57</sup> Further, this English governor betrayed lack of good taste and intellectual honesty when on the one hand he used exaggerated and unbecoming epithets for Shah Alam in his official despatches and in his letters to his friends in England, e.g., "this wretched king of shreds and patches," "this idle pageant," "an idol of our creation," etc., etc., on the other he continued at the same time professing open loyalty and devotion to the Mughal ruler, before and after the Benares decision and also sending him *nazars* and receiving *khilaats* from him,—the universally recognized medieval symbols of allegiance to a sovereign authority.<sup>58</sup>

Professor P. E. Roberts approves of the policy, for he says "it is difficult to see what other course was possible."<sup>59</sup> The course has already been suggested. It is to have waited for the news of the Maratha preparations to return to the north for which there was little likelihood for years owing to a revolution at Poona due to the murder of Peshwa Narayan Rao and long dissension among the ruling factions

<sup>56</sup> Hastings to Shah Alam, *vide Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 98-99; C.P.C., IV. 528.

<sup>57</sup> C.P.C., IV. 719, 732, 752, 802, etc.

<sup>58</sup> C.P.C., IV. 308, 309, 364, 372, 414, 648, 866, 1066, etc.

<sup>59</sup> *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V. p. 216.

in Maharashtra. But if a settlement in advance were at all necessary the best solution was to have allowed Shuja to hold the districts in the name of the emperor, which would have satisfied both Shah Alam and the wazir, as the latter wanted effective possession of them. This would not have necessitated any change in the plan of their defence, as they were to remain in Shuja's hands in either case. But such an arrangement would not have procured fifty lakhs to the company, an object so dear to Hastings' heart. It would, however, have been free from moral criticism and Barker would not have described it as a "shocking, horrible and outrageous breach of faith."<sup>60</sup>

Hastings' foreign policy stands condemned for the injurious reaction that it produced at the courts of Delhi and Poona and also probably at the capitals of other powers in the country. Shah Alam was so irreconcilably antagonised that for years he hatched secret plots for the overthrow of the British power in Bengal, trying to enlist the support of the Marathas and of other peoples in the proposed enterprise.<sup>61</sup> Had the Mughal lord possessed the requisite ability and strength of character he would have endangered the peace of Bengal, if not actually threatened the safety of the English position there.

Notwithstanding the fact that Shuja's conduct and policy at the conference cannot be justified on patriotic and moral grounds, as he cared only for his own principality and his personal interests as against the interests of the country as a whole and his sovereign and practically repudiated allegiance to the Mughal emperor by offering to act as George III's wazir in India and to strike coins in his name,<sup>62</sup> he was not actuated by material considerations alone. His greatest ambition was to have the satisfaction of not only passing on to his descendants the whole of the territory, without diminution, that he had inherited from his father,

<sup>60</sup> Bond, *Speeches in the trial of W. Hastings*, Vol. IV. p. 759.

<sup>61</sup> Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, III. 220-228.

<sup>62</sup> C.P.C., IV. 477, 478; Gleig, *Memoirs of Hastings*, II. 137.

but also of adding to it that region which Safdar Jang had, despite his repeated attempts, failed to conquer. This sentiment impelled him to agree to pay such a dear price for the recovery of Kora and Allahabad and still greater for the acquisition of Ruhelkhand. On the contrary, Hastings, though he had no personal axe to grind, did not seek to acquire a great political object and was dominated by the desire of getting money to relieve the financial embarrassment of the company in England, for besides its being a patriotic duty the appreciation of his services depended upon his ability to add to the income of the proprietors of that mercantile organisation. And his efforts yielded a rich harvest of money, one krór and thirty-one lakhs,<sup>63</sup> according to Hastings' own calculation, in two years. In pursuance of the above object, he disregarded considerations of international law, gave Shuja the promise of military assistance for conquering Ruhelkhand and became the cause of the political destruction of a people who had no quarrel with the company. The acquisition of the natural frontier (Ganges) for Oudh by annexing Ruhelkhand to it was but a secondary object with Hastings; for, while he made so much of it in his letters and despatches, Shuja himself, who was the author of the Ruhela project and stood to gain by it, did not cant on the subject and his letters to Hastings contained the only argument that the Ruhelas had treacherously violated a solemn agreement and therefore must be expelled from their country. Nor does any contemporary Persian authority refer to it as one of the reasons responsible for the wazir's decision. Moreover even an acquaintance with the map will reveal that the annexation of entire Ruhelkhand to Oudh could not have provided, as it actually did not provide, Shuja a continuous scientific frontier on the west. His recent acquisitions in the lower and mid-doab for a part of which Hastings' sale of Kora and Allahabad was responsible

<sup>63</sup> Davies, *W. Hastings and Oudh*, 52; Hastings to Anderson, September 13, 1786, *vide Hastings and the Rohila War*, 116 F. N.

had pushed the wazir's territory to north-east of Agra and had left his frontier line from that place to Anupshahr on the Ganges absolutely without a natural barrier and therefore exposed to Maratha attack from the side of Delhi. Hastings, who must surely have been aware of it, could not have meant anything more by his repetitions of the scientific frontier plea except misleading the ignorant. But the surprise is that both his modern and ancient critics missed this absolutely valid objection against his Ruhela policy. The theory of the Maratha menace to Oudh does not hold water, for the scheme was decided upon in September, while the Marathas had left northern India in May. Dr. Davies admits that "the Maratha menace had ceased for the time being," but he says that "this was no reason for indefinitely postponing any scheme for strengthening the defences of Oudh."<sup>64</sup> A careful consideration of every aspect of the problem would not have meant an indefinite postponement of it and all the evidence in our possession points to the fact that Hastings had pledged for an immediate conquest of Ruhelkhand and had not Shuja of his own accord postponed it to the early months of 1774, the political and economic destruction of the Ruhelas would have taken place during the winter of 1773. This is absolutely clear from Champion's entry of 30th August, 1773, in his diary in which he writes: "He (Hastings) gave me to understand that the Brigade (which was then encamped near Benares) would soon be ordered down the country, upon which I observed to the Governor that I was determined to go home, but he strongly advised me to the contrary."<sup>65</sup> The fact is that Hastings was so much anxious for availing himself of the

<sup>64</sup> Davies, *W. Hastings and Oudh*, 24.

<sup>65</sup> *Soldiering in India*, p. 144.

For the views of modern British historians about Hastings' foreign policy see Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 92-116; Forrest, *Selections etc.*, I. 20-40; Roberts, *Cambridge History of India*, V. 215-24; A. M. Davies, *W. Hastings*, 122-127; C. Davies, *W. Hastings and Oudh*, 22-40.

opportunity of getting money for the company that he encouraged Shuja to undertake the expedition and promised him assistance without thinking out the details of the scheme and of its consequences. He seems to have been doubtful of the expediency of the project and that was why he kept it concealed even from his own colleagues of the council till it had become impossible to withhold the information. He thus became guilty of imprudence and rashness.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE RUHELA WAR, APRIL 1774

#### **Shuja's schemes of aggression ; he applies for English assistance.**

After having taken over charge of the Kora and Allahabad districts on 18th September 1773 from Lawrell,<sup>1</sup> Shuja returned from Benares to Faizabad where he arrived on the 25th. Meanwhile he received news of Peshwa Narayan Rao's murder at Poona at 30th August and the consequent dissensions between his successor Raghuba and the ministerial party. This gave him an unexpected opportunity for indulging his fondness for schemes of self-aggrandizement. He resolved to take advantage of the confusion in the Maratha affairs, banish their influence from the Doab and Bundelkhand and bring those regions under his control. His policy was to act with promptitude so as to complete the subjugation of the above districts before the Marathas could recover from their recent shock and the Ruhelas could move to make a bid for Etawah and the neighbouring districts which had been in their possession during 1761—1770. He was also apprehensive lest Najaf Khan, who had driven off the Jats from the Mathura district, should forestall his designs on the defenceless Etawah. A clever diplomat that he was, the wazir sought to secure imperial sanction to his schemes and to win the neutrality and even friendship of the neighbouring chiefs, such as Muzaffar Jang of Farrukhabad, the rajah of Gohad and other

<sup>1</sup> James Lawrell took over charge of the districts at Hastings' orders from Munir on 26th June 1773 (see Ben. Sec. Cons., 26th April, 1773 and Lawrell to Board, June 26th, 1773). Hastings effected the change hastily so that he might with some show of reason demand a price for them from Shuja in September. Had they been allowed to remain in Munir's hands, Shuja might have said that he was taking them from the emperor's agent.

potentates, to ensure an easy success of the expedition.<sup>2</sup>

While the above plan was still maturing Shuja informed Hastings, early in October, of his intention to subjugate Etawah and the other Maratha districts in the Doab and enquired whether the English would assist him in the campaign. As he received no reply, he wrote another letter (beginning of November), to Hastings repeating his request and informing him that he would not allow the Ruhelas, who were equally eager to obtain possession of the said territory which they claimed as their own, to forestall his designs, and renewing his proposal for the conquest of Ruhelkhand that he had postponed at Benares owing to financial considerations. The wazir wanted to know whether on the terms agreed upon at Benares, namely payment by him of forty lakhs of rupees on the conclusion of the campaign and of the expenses of the English troops at the rate of Rs. 210,000 per brigade per month for its duration, he could depend upon the company's assistance. He further desired the governor to fulfil his promise of supplying him 10,000 muskets and to send him an early reply on both the points, as he intended to proceed to Kora,<sup>3</sup> that is, for the conquest of Etawah.

## 2. The English agree to assist Shuja.

As regards the supply of muskets the Bengal government agreed to send only 2000 and Hastings had to write to Shuja that the remaining would be supplied after they had been received from England. The wazir was practically given a blank cheque so far as the Doab scheme was concerned, although he was not unambiguously promised aid for its execution. "With respect to the Doab," wrote Hastings to the wazir "you are the master to act in whatever manner you shall deem most fitting for the advancement and security of your own

<sup>2</sup> C.P.C., IV. 705, 802; *Madec*, p. 50; Lawrell to Ben. Board September 18, 1773. Also C.P.C., IV. 577 and 582.

<sup>3</sup> Shuja to Hastings (received on 23rd Oct. and another on 18th Nov.) *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Nov. 19, 1773 and also Ben. Sec. Cons., Vol. IX. pp. 696-701; C.P.C., IV. 584, 626, 641.

affairs." He was, however, advised not to entangle himself in an expedition far away from his dominions which he was not sure of carrying to a successful conclusion with his own strength, for though the company was not bound to assist him in a war of aggression, "I [Hastings] certainly cannot sit still and see your danger without endeavouring to relieve you."<sup>4</sup> Thus indirectly Hastings pledged the wazir assistance in this expedition, which had the effect of encouraging him in the pursuit of aggressive schemes of conquest. On the question of the subjugation of Ruhelkhand, however, the governor met with a tough opposition from the council. He had so far withheld from the council the information that at Benares he had pledged his word for assisting the wazir in the complete reduction of the Ruhelas. In view of Shuja's requisition of the promised aid, Hastings had now to place the matter before his colleagues. He had no difficulty with the select committee which resolved on 19th November, on his motion, to comply with the wazir's request and to order the second brigade to hold itself in readiness for marching as soon as Shuja desired it. But when the resolution was placed before the full council it was found that there were as many opinions as there were members. Eventually three days' discussion concluded with the resolution (26th Nov.), Barker dissenting, that it was desirable "to avoid the expedition proposed," but sensible of the embarrassment of Hastings "from what passed on the subject between him and the Wazir at Benares" and in order "to save the honour of the Company and watch over its interests" the Board approved of the draft of a letter from Hastings to the wazir which while accepting Shuja's proposal and promising him assistance required regular and punctual compliance with the monetary obligations relating thereto and a definite undertaking on the part of the nawab that once the expedition begun "it will be absolutely necessary to persevere in it until it shall be accomplished." The council believed that the letter was "calculated

<sup>4</sup> Ben. Sec. Cons., 22nd November 1773; also Strachey, *Hastings and the Ruhela War*, p. 128.

to drive the Vizier into a refusal," but if he accepted the condition, "it (the measure) must turn altogether to the Company's interest."<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Shuja conquers Etawah and other districts.

Shuja-ud-daulah rightly gave the Doab expedition precedence over that against the Ruhelas and set out towards Lucknow on 4th November at the head of fifty thousand troops *en route* to Kora where he waited for a reply of his proposal to Hastings. Before he could know the intention of the Bengal government, he marched to Qanauj and entered into a friendly pact with Muzaffar Jang of Farrukhabad which detached the latter from the Ruhela confederacy, converted him into a practically subordinate ally and secured his co-operation in the wazir's impending campaigns in the Doab and Ruhelkhand. On his part Shuja promised to promote the interest of the Bangash chief and to deliver to him "the territories he formerly possessed and which he has lost in the war, to the Marathas."<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously with it he opened negotiations with Shah Alam for securing the imperial moral and political support. On getting Hastings' reply, he informed him of his decision to postpone the Ruhela expedition for the time being as he was undertaking one against the Marathas in the Doab and requested him for a loan of twelve big guns and two companies of English troops. Then he commenced the campaign and proceeding in a south-westerly direction from Qanauj reduced a few Maratha fortalices on his way to Etawah which he besieged on the 12th December. The Maratha commandant Hari Pandit with his garrison four to five thousand all told shut himself up in the fort and arranging five or six guns that he

<sup>5</sup> Ben. Sec. Cons., 22nd and 26th Nov. 1773, *vide* vol. IX, pp. 696-775 Letter to C. P. Dec. 30, 1773; Fifth Report, App. 22 and 23.

<sup>6</sup> George Forster, *A journey etc.*, 1798, p. 168. According to Najimul Ghani, *vide* Akhbar vol. I. p. 468, Muzaffar agreed to pay Shuja a tribute of 4½ lakhs of rupees; *Harcharan*, 512 b (date of start). *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad*, Vol. II p. 10 gives 22nd Oct. as the date of Shuja's start; but I prefer Harcharan's, who is a better authority.

possessed on its walls opened fire on the besiegers. He fought against the odds for four days, and finding his position hopeless with no prospect of reinforcement from any quarter, sued for terms on the 14th through Mahbub Ali Khan and surrendered the fort on the 15th. The garrison was allowed to retire with their property, leaving the entire district of Etawah and the neighbouring mahals into the hands of the wazir who celebrated the victory on the next day which happened to be the Id after the fast of Ramzan. Shuja entered the town on the 18th and after appointing Shaikh Kabir commandant of the fort and Anup Giri Gosain as faujdar of the district marched towards Agra to bring the adjoining territory under his sway and to meet Najaf Khan whose victorious army was pushing on with the siege of the Agra fort.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4. Najaf acquires Agra ; his meeting with Shuja.

An important reason why Shuja had pushed on to finish the Etawah expedition as quickly as possible was the progress of Najaf Khan against the Jat territory lying north of that district. The Khan's victorious legions had occupied the town of Agra on 11th December, almost the very day on which the wazir had appeared before the walls of Etawah, and were hammering at the fort which they had besieged immediately after. Najaf and Shuja had been old enemies, and the former's recent successes excited the wazir's jealousy and impelled him to fish in troubled waters. Luckily for him both the Jat chief (Nawal Singh) and Najaf sought his assistance, the former for saving the remnant of the Jat kingdom for which he promised to him the cession of the Agra fort, and the latter for the complete reduction of the

<sup>7</sup> C.P.C., IV. 704, 705, 712, 719, 731, 732, 736, 749, 751 ; S.P.D., Vol. XXIX. 263. *Gentil*, 282, *Madic*, II. 50 ; *Harcharn*, 512b. *Ruqaat-i-Lachhmi Narayan*, 9-22 (contemporary and detailed, but fulsome and hyperbolic) D.C. 276 ; *Ghulam Ali*, III. 49 (inaccurate) ; *Imad*, 114 ; *Mirah*, 264 ; *Maadam*, IV. 25 2a ; *Siyar*, 938-39.



said stronghold, which had defied his might for a month, in the name of their common religion and sovereign. Shuja seized the opportunity and despatched to Agra a few battalions of his troops under Basant Ali Khan and some guns in charge of Major Polier (a Swiss engineer lent to him by the Bengal government to supervise the construction of his buildings at Faizabad) with instructions to get into touch with the Jat commandant of the fort and take peaceful possession of it in accordance with the agreement with Nawal Singh, but if he refused to deliver the fort, they were to follow Najaf's orders. The commandant's plan to make the fort over to the wazir's men was foiled by Najaf's vigilance. Therefore Polier, when put in charge of the trenches opposite Shahburj, enthusiastically co-operated with the imperialists and his batteries having effected a breach in the wall of the Bungla-burj laid the buildings inside the fort under a galling fire. Although the besieged gave a good account of themselves, displaying a dogged courage and valour that characterised their race, it was futile to continue the unequal struggle, with all supplies of men and provisions to the fort being cut off by the besieger. So they agreed to surrender on Najaf's pledging his word for the safety of life and property of the garrison. Najaf occupied the fort on 18th February, and the Jat *qilādār* (a brother of Dan Shah) apprehending treachery from the Musalmans, fled away during the night, leaving his heavy baggage and property behind. The rank and file of the garrison seem to have been allowed to leave without molestation.<sup>8</sup>

In view of Najaf's ascendancy at the court and in the empire Shuja thought it politic to lay aside his age-long bitterness and to win him over as a friend and ally whose support was likely to be of great value in his impending war with the Ruhelas. Accordingly the wazir extended a cordial invitation to Najaf and himself moved up from Etawah to the

<sup>8</sup> *Khair-ud-din*, 242-246 ; D.C., 276-277 ; *Mirat*, 264b ; *Ghulam Ali*, III. 45-51 ; *M.L.*, 152 ; *Harcharan*, 493b ; *Imad.*, 115 ; *Mutakharin*, 213b-214a ; C.P.C., IV. 904, 907, 1022.

vicinity of Agra to receive him. Najaf crossed the Jamuna near Agra on 4th March and saw the wazir on the 6th. Shuja sent his eldest son Mirza Amani to welcome the Khan in advance and on arrival he himself accorded him a cordial and pompous reception, presenting him jewels, wearing apparel and some other articles, valued at one lakh of rupees and nominating him deputy wazir. The entertainment lasted for two days and when the Ruhela question came up for consideration, Najaf, who was overwhelmed with the wazir's generosity, agreed to join the expedition and advised him to persuade the emperor to appear at the head of the allied troops so as to enlist his military and moral support, as the Ruhelas invariably sank their mutual differences and united together in the face of a common danger.<sup>9</sup> A private understanding regarding their respective territorial spheres of influence also seems to have been arrived at between the two chiefs, after which Najaf returned to Agra and the wazir to Shikohabad where he arrived on the 10th November. Shuja having no apprehension from the side of Najaf, marched to Kauriaganj 15 miles south-east of Aligarh, and occupied, besides Etawah which was already in his possession, the entire modern districts of Mainpuri and Etah and parts of those of Agra and Aligarh with the Ganges in the north, the Jamuna in the south, Kauriaganj on the north-west and Firozabad in the south-west.

#### **5. Shuja's precautions and diplomatic measures before the Ruhela War.**

Soon after expelling the Marathas from the Doab Shuja wrote to Hastings for an immediate despatch of one of the company's brigades for employment against the Ruhelas, agreeing to all the terms settled at Benares on 7th September and repeated in the governor's letter of 3rd December, but reserving to himself the right of retaining the brigade in his service as long as he liked or dismissing it at his

<sup>9</sup> D.C., 278-279; *Khair-ud-din*, 246-247; *Imad*, 115, *Siyar*, 938-939; *Mirat*, 256b; C.P.C., IV. 907.

will. He also requested Thomas Lane, chief of Patna, to put the brigade in motion without delay. The Bengal council had hoped that it had extricated itself from an awkward situation created by Hastings' Benares commitments. That delusion was now dispelled, and it became necessary to comply with the wazir's request. Accordingly Champion was directed to assume command of the second brigade at Dinajpur and march to Oudh.<sup>10</sup>

Sometime in November 1773 before he had embarked on his Doab expedition Shuja had started negotiations with the emperor with a view to secure royal sanction to his schemes of aggression under cover of a promise "to place the finances of the royal household on a solid footing," to conquer the whole country in the name of His Majesty "and himself to remain content "with what is given him by His Majesty." The negotiations had not yet passed beyond the preliminary stage before the wazir was able to acquire possession of Etawah and other Maratha districts in the mid-Doab, and now his diplomacy was directed towards winning higher things, namely, inducing Shah Alam to grant him a rescript for the above territory and securing both his sanction and military assistance in his proposed expeditions against the Ruhelas and the Bundelas. For this purpose he sent his prime minister Muhammad Elich Khan to Delhi on 15th January, 1774 with instructions to endeavour to convince him that the wazir's object was to establish garrisons throughout the country on behalf of the emperor, and to bring the latter for placing himself at the head of the army to be sent to fight the Ruhelas. During more than a month's stay at Delhi Elich Khan did his best to impress upon Shah Alam that the wazir's schemes were solely intended to extend the empire and augment the royal income. He even promised an annual tribute of thirty-six lakhs of rupees from the wazir, if the king conferred on him a rescript for all the territory he had recently wrested from the Marathas and

<sup>10</sup> Ben. Sec. Cons., Vol. IX. 41-42; Shuja to Hastings, received on 4th Feb. and Shuja to Lane received on 27th January 1774.

agreed to co-operate with him in his schemes of further conquests. He pledged himself to advance three lakhs immediately for royal expenses, if Shah Alam set out to join the wazir in the Ruhela war. But owing to the hostile attitude of Abdul Ahad Khan and the emperor's distrust of the wazir, who according to him had never been able to fulfil his engagements in the past, the final decision was deferred till the arrival of Najaf Khan who was summoned to the presence. Shuja-ud-daulah had, as we have seen, already won Najaf by helping him to reduce the Agra fort, no less than by his generous entertainments and precious presents, and the grateful Khan strongly recommended the acceptance of the wazir's proposal of the emperor's appearing at the head of his troops in the Ruhela campaign on the side of Shuja and dividing Ruhelkhand with him half and half. The recommendation was accepted and accompanied by Najaf and Elich the emperor marched as far as Ghaziabad where he fell ill and had to return, sending Najaf to unite his troops with those from Oudh and to fight the Ruhelas.<sup>11</sup>

Mention has been made of Shuja's having successfully weaned Muzaffar Bangash from his kinsmen of Ruhelkhand. When the news of this diplomatic success reached Hafiz he was filled with indignation and taunting Muzaffar with cowardice charged him with having sold his freedom for a mess of pottage. He accused him as being unworthy of the seed of Ahmad Khan who with inferior numbers and resources had inflicted a defeat upon and held his own against Shuja's father, backed by all the resources of the empire, and never humbled himself before his hereditary foe of Oudh. This did not impress Muzaffar who forwarded Hafiz's letter to the wazir,<sup>12</sup> and the latter was encouraged in his policy of sowing dissension among the Ruhelas. The next victim of his diplomacy was Zabita Khan, who owing to the difficulties of his situation, created by the Sikh inroads into his territory and the

<sup>11</sup> C.P.C., IV. 705, 801, 802, 907, 973, 978, 1026 ; *Ghulam Ali*, III. 52-53 ; *Khair-ud-din*, 248 ; *Mirat*, 265a & b ; *Mutakherin*, 214a & b.

<sup>12</sup> *Imad*, p. 114.

hostility of a powerful faction at the imperial court, was in a mood to listen to the wazir's overtures, and the latter's assurance of friendship and solemn guarantee of the integrity of his possessions had the effect of detaching him from Hafiz Rahmat and other Ruhela chiefs. And although Zabita continued secretly intriguing with his clansmen Shuja's clever diplomacy reduced him to the status of a subordinate, though half-hearted, ally.<sup>13</sup> Next came the turn of Hafiz's near relations and colleagues. The example was set long before the Etawah expedition by Hafiz's own son Inayat Khan who had rebelled against his father and joined the wazir and though he had returned on getting scent of Shuja's hostile intention against his fatherland, yet his conduct and example had produced a demoralising effect on the Ruhela chiefs who had long been complaining against Hafiz's rapacity and injustice. Shuja-ud-daulah turned the situation in Ruhelkhand to his advantage and by a promise of respecting their family estates and even adding some more territory to them after the war he secured the pledge of neutrality from Fateh-Ullah Khan and Mahib-Ullah Khan, (sons of the late Dunde Khan), Mustaqim Khan (son of Diler Khan), Bakhshi Ahmad Khan and some other notable Ruhela chieftains.<sup>14</sup>

#### 6. The failure of negotiations with Hafiz.

Even after he had resolved to uproot the Ruhela power Shuja-ud-daulah continued negotiations with Hafiz, not so much to explore all possibilities of a satisfactory settlement of the dispute as to make out a case against his principal enemy and to demonstrate to the Indian world that he was not fighting a war of aggression. He took up practically a moral stand. He maintained that he had several times personally gone to the assistance of the Ruhelas, that they had repaid him with intrigues, that whereas he had fulfilled the terms of the treaty of 13th June 1772, Hafiz was deliberately

<sup>13</sup> *Miskin*, 292-293 ; *Bihari Lal*, 18-19.

<sup>14</sup> *Gulistan*, 111 ; *Gul.*, 131b-132a ; *Siyar*, 936-37 ; *Maadan*, IV. 253a., *Imad*, 118, *Hamilton*, 220-229.



violating it, that he had incurred a huge expenditure in expelling the Marathas from Ruhelkhand and yet they refused to pay him forty lakhs settled by the said treaty and that the Ruhelas, in general and Hafiz in particular had not only insulted him more than once but had also endeavoured to sow dissension between him and the English. Hafiz, on the other hand, flatly denied the charges and said that the wazir had undertaken the expedition against the Marathas for the defence of Oudh and therefore it was unjust to demand from him forty lakh or any fraction thereof. He maintained that Shuja, fearing that Hafiz would allow the Marathas passage through Ruhelkhand and join them in an attack on Oudh, had of his own accord absolved him from the responsibility of paying the forty lakhs, and finally that the wazir had forfeited his claim of forty lakhs on him after his (wazir's) conquest of Etawah and the neighbouring districts which had once belonged to him and were worth more than twenty lakhs which was his obligation out of forty lakhs promised to Shuja. The wazir's main contention was undoubtedly valid inasmuch as he had driven out the Marathas from Ruhelkhand and was therefore entitled to forty lakhs which were not paid, while Hafiz's assertion that Shuja had absolved the Ruhelas from the obligation of the aforesaid treaty is not borne out by facts and his claim that the wazir had forfeited his right to the indemnity because of his conquest of Etawah is equally preposterous, for the territory in question was not conquered from Hafiz or any other Ruhela chief, but from the Marathas who had held it for about three years. But though guilty of obstinacy and deliberate perversion of facts, it must be mentioned in fairness to Hafiz that the other Ruhela chiefs being unwilling to contribute their share of the indemnity, he was to some extent handicapped in discharging the debt and that the wazir was seeking to inflict upon him and in fact upon the entire Ruhela race a punishment which was out of proportion to their guilt.

Despite Hafiz's uncompromising attitude and Shuja's

policy not to forgo<sup>15</sup> a single pie of the indemnity, negotiations were not given up, and Zabita Khan made an endeavour to compose the differences and bring about a settlement. He wrote to Hafiz, appealing to his sense of honour and impressing upon him the desirability of being fair to the wazir who had rendered a good service to the entire Ruhela community more than once. But Hafiz replied that the wazir's allegations were false and that he had not been guilty of any hostile attitude against him. Despaired of success through correspondence, Zabita paid a personal visit to Hafiz and after a long discussion concluded his appeal in these words:—"Whatever is past is past. Do you now entrust your sons to me so that I can go to the wazir and restore the friendly relations between you. Unless I go to the wazir with your sons, his ill-feeling will not be removed." Hafiz declined the proposal and got enraged with Zabita, and the latter, having been disappointed, proceeded to join the wazir,<sup>16</sup> then encamped near Aligarh.

### 7. Shuja marches to the frontier of Ruhelkhand

When the breakdown of the negotiations occurred, Shuja at the head of fifty thousand troops and his new ally Muzaffar were encamped at Kauriaganj, 15 miles south-east of Aligarh, in the mid Doab awaiting the arrival of Shah Alam who was expected to set out shortly from Delhi and effect junction with the wazir. When he heard that the emperor was about to leave the capital, he marched to Kasganj, 36 miles east of Aligarh and not far from the right bank of the Ganges, in order to be as near the road taken by the imperialists as possible. Here he was joined by Zabita. His plan was to cross the Ganges at Ramghat and launch a powerful attack on Hafiz who, on learning of the

<sup>15</sup> Hastings had advised Shuja "to take what he could but not give up a rupee. Whatever deficiency there should be in their payments would serve as a fair pretence for any future designs he might form against them." [see *Benares Diary* quoted by Strachey, p. 114]. Shuja was already following the same policy and the advice confirms it.

<sup>16</sup> *Bihari Lal*, 18-19.

concentration of enemy troops near his western frontier, had advanced as far as Aonla, 16 miles south-west of Bareilly (24th March 1774). But the news of the arrival of the English brigade under Champion near the eastern boundary of Ruh lkhand and the delay in the emperor's start necessitated a change in the strategy of the wazir who, deciding to invade the Ruhela territory from the east and not from the west, retraced his steps back towards Etawah and Qanauj. This gave rise to a rumour that being struck with fear he was retreating to Oudh and the Ruhela rank and file talked derisively of the wazir and his late father.<sup>17</sup> But without minding the taunts, Shuja continued his march.

Meanwhile Champion, who had succeeded Barker as commander-in-chief of Bengal and directed on 14th February 1774 to proceed at the head of the second brigade to assist the wazir had arrived near Qanauj. The military conduct of the expedition was entirely left to him, but the political relations between the company and the wazir were entrusted to Middleton who had recently been appointed political resident at his court. Champion was instructed not to cross the boundaries of Ruhelkhand on any account whatever and to see that the wazir paid the monthly subsidy of the troops punctually, and if payment fell into arrears for one month, he was authorised to suspend operations, retire to Benares and wait there for further orders and till the payment had been made. Having effected junction with the wazir south of Shahabad (16 miles south of Shahjahanpur) Champion encamped at that town on 15th April. From there the allies advanced in a north-westerly direction, crossed the Gurra on the 17th and leaving Shahjahanpur town to their right, arrived at a spot six miles short of Tilhar on the 18th. Hafiz's encampment near Miranpur Katra was 13 miles from this place and seven miles north-west of Tilhar.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Miskin*, 293-294.

<sup>18</sup> Ben. Board to Champion, Feb. 14, 1774, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., Vol. X. pp. 47-73 ; *Soldiering in India*, 179-186 ; C. P. C., V. 791.

### 8. Hafiz attempts to gain time ; final peace talks.

In view of the change in Shuja-ud-daulah's strategy Hafiz had returned from Aonla to Bareilly and marched rapidly towards his eastern frontier, setting up his encampment near the village of Miranpur Katra. As he was not yet joined by some prominent Ruhela chiefs he wished to gain time for augmenting the strength of his army, and therefore, even before the wazir had formed junction with the second brigade, he wrote to Champion, requesting his mediation for a peaceful settlement of the dispute. Hafiz's first letter was received by Champion on 12th April and was followed by three others on 18th, 21st and 22nd. In none of them did Hafiz give any indication of his willingness to pay the indemnity and what he stated in general terms was that he had never acted against the wazir's wishes and yet the latter was hostile. In the last letter he pleaded that poverty of his country was the cause of his inability to meet Shuja's demand, and he appealed for Champion's intercession on his behalf. Both the wazir and the English commander-in-chief considered Hafiz's letters as evasive and intended "merely to gain time as he was expected to be joined by other troops." Hence Champion advised the Ruhela chief to act conformably to the wazir's desire and, if he wanted peace, to pay him two krors of rupees which he was demanding in view of the heavy expenditure incurred in assisting him and other chiefs of Ruhelkhand, and in the event of default to be ready for war.<sup>19</sup> Another attempt made through Zabita who received a copy of the Quran from Hafiz met with the same fate.<sup>20</sup>

### 9. The allies advance to Miran Katra.

Despite Hafiz's delaying tactics the allies continued their advance. As the wazir moved beyond Shahjahanpur, he sent six to seven hundred of his cavalry to plunder and burn the

<sup>19</sup> Ben. Sec. Cons., 2nd January 1774, *vide* Vol. XXVI. 2-9.

<sup>20</sup> *Miskin*, 294.

Ruhela villages on either side of the Gurra and the defenceless inhabitants had to flee for shelter to the jungle. On the 20th one hundred men from a village armed with bows and arrows and some with matchlocks attacked that part of the wazir's cavalry which was posted as Champion's bodyguard and put them to flight, killing a jamadar and wounding three or four horsemen. As information was received that Hafiz was entrenched in a strong position in a bend of the rivulet Bahgul, his troops facing the rivulet with their backs to the north a lake further south of their position and the village of Miranpur Katra to their west, Shuja strongly recommended to Champion the necessity of endeavouring to draw the enemy out of his entrenchment by a stratagem and proposed that the allied troops should make a show of marching towards Pilibhit where the enemy's family and treasure were lodged. But, although he later on took for himself the credit of having drawn the enemy out of his strong position from behind Miran Katra, Champion did everything in his power to dissuade the wazir from undertaking such a feint. Owing to the nawab's insistence he eventually agreed to the proposal but with great reluctance.<sup>21</sup> The allies crossed the Gurra at daylight on the 21st about 5 miles north of Tilhar and proceeding northwards in the direction of Pilibhit, about 42 miles away, pitched their camp at 11 a.m. on a plain between the eastern bank of the Gurra and a narrow *nālā* running about three miles east of it, with their right wing towards the village of Majhla (on the *nālā* and about 13 miles N. E. of Tilhar) and their left in front of the village of Khiria (on the eastern bank of the Gurra and about 9 miles north of Tilhar), thus leaving Hafiz's entrenchment 8 miles behind to the south-west. The feint succeeded, and Hafiz with his whole force quitted his strongly fortified entrenchment and moved five miles north of it, intending to reach Pilibhit before the allies. Hafiz having thus deprived himself of the advantage of Bohgul *nālā* and Miran Katra, there was no necessity for the allies to proceed any further towards Pilibhit, and they halted on 22nd.

<sup>21</sup> *Soldiering in India*, p. 189.



There now being a distance of about seven miles and the river Gurra the only obstacle between the opposing forces, Shuja's horse had that day several skirmishes with those of the enemy. The wazir saw Champion twice, and it was decided to give battle the next morning. The English army followed by Basant Ali Khan's battalions was to begin the attack, and the wazir was also to send his Najib Paltans and 2,000 horse to join them, and himself to follow with his whole force. The order of disposition was also settled. Basant with his five battalions was to march immediately in the English rear and fall in upon their left on forming the line of battle, while Latafat, the commander of the Najib Paltans, was to divide his battalions into two divisions of 4,000 each, one division to form a column upon the right flank and the other on the left flank of the allied line, and to occupy such villages as might be on their right or left. The entire army was to be under arms by three in the morning and ready for marching at half-past three. No gun was to be fired or drum to beat "except the taps as a signal for turning out", and all the baggage was to be left in the mud-fort of Manjhla, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles east of the Gurra<sup>22</sup>.

### 10. The strength of the rival forces.

There is no reliable record of the number of troops and guns on the side of Shuja. The total strength of the allied army is put even by contemporary writers at the exaggerated figure of more than a lakh of combatants and numberless non-combatants. Hafiz's son writes that the wazir's army numbered 1,15,000 and gives the names of commanding officers and the strength of their respective divisions. But no reliance can be placed in these figures. Shuja-ud-daulah himself stated that he had 50,000 troops when he had marched against Etawah—figures that are confirmed by a contemporary writer of the Oudh court.<sup>23</sup> Add to these about 2,000 troops

<sup>22</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 190-191.

<sup>23</sup> C. P. C., IV. 705; *Ruqaat-i-Lachhmi Narayan*, 10-15.

of Muzaffar Bangash and nearly the same number under his new adherent, Zabita Khan and we have 54,000 as the effective fighting strength of the wazir's army. The company's second brigade consisted of one company of artillery, the 2nd European regiment, about 100 cadets and six battalions of sepoy, totalling some 5,000 troops and these together with the English battalions in the wazir's permanent employ, raised the total strength of the company's troops under Champion, according to the Ma'atha envoy who was present in the field, to 1,000 to 1,200 white soldiers and 6,000 Purbia infantry.<sup>24</sup> The correct estimate of the entire allied force would thus most probably be 61,200 combatants and about two hundred guns of which twenty belonged to the English. The Ruhela army too has been variously estimated at ten thousand, twenty-five thousand, twenty-eight thousand, thirty to forty thousand, sixty thousand and even about seventy thousand.<sup>25</sup> But I accept the figures given by Champion, namely, forty thousand troops and about fifty guns,—figures confirmed by Miskin and from the diary of Allan Macpherson<sup>26</sup> whose estimate is based on enquiries made on the spot.

### 11. The battle of Miranpur<sup>27</sup> Katra, 23rd April. 1774.

In compliance with Champion's instructions the allied army was up and under arms at 3 A.M. on the 23rd and marching a little northwards crossed the Gurra at the ferry of Khudaganj, dragged the heavy guns over the sandy plain with difficulty, as the last quarter of the night was very dark (it being the 12th day of the bright half of the Hindu month

<sup>24</sup> S. P. D., XXIX. 280. Exaggerated figures are given in *Gulistan*, 115, *Gul.*, 37a ; *Imad*, and others.

<sup>25</sup> *Gulistan*, 115 ; *Gul.*, 139 ; *Hamilton* ; *G. Ali*, III. 54 ; *Harcharan*, 512b ; *Siyar*, 937 ; *T. M.* 265b ; *Imad*, 115 ; *Maadan*, IV. 253b.

<sup>26</sup> Champion to Ben. Council, April 24, 1774 ; *Miskin*, 295 ; *Soldiering in India*, 203.

<sup>27</sup> The battle was not fought at Miranpur Katra, but near the site of the present village of Fatehganj Sharqi, which is 5 miles north of Katra. I have retained the name for convenience of scholars.

of Vaishākh), and then proceeded to the west, being guided by Akbar Khan, the dispossessed Rajah of Muhammadi who was fully acquainted with the topography of the locality. Marching in the prescribed formation of three columns they soon got to the road leading to Jalalpur, 2 miles west of the Gurra, and having passed that village about sunrise turned southward and at half-past seven came in sight of the Ruhela encampment, about 5 miles north of Miranpur Katra and just to the east of the modern village of Fatehganj Sharqi. Orders were now given to the grenadiers, who formed the first column, to halt so as to allow the second and third columns to come up, and the second division of the Najib battalions on the English left flank was directed to push on and take post in the village, most probably Bhuria, on a rising ground in their front. In compliance with Champion's instructions Macpherson now rode to the top of an eminence to reconnoitre the enemy's movement. He found confusion in Hafiz's camp and his troops endeavouring to form, which showed that they had not expected an attack that day and were taken by surprise. By this time Champion himself came to where Macpherson was standing and gave immediate orders for the battle to form, which were obeyed without loss of time, as the Ruhelas had begun firing their guns and rockets. The combined force, divided into two lines one behind the other, faced south, inclining nominally to the west, and its disposition, when finally completed, was as follows:—The right wing, composed of the corps of cadets and sepoy grenadiers under Major Hannay and three battalions of sepoys and a body of cavalry from the wazir's army with their flank protected by Shuja's 4,000 Najib troops, drew up towards the Bohgul *nālā* and almost parallel to the angle of the left flank of Hafiz's encampment, and was commanded by Lieutenant Leslie. The wazir's five trained battalions, 8,000 strong, under Basant with their flank covered by 4,000 Najibs and 1,000 horse, formed the left wing. The European regiment, which was the corps of the brigade, took up its position in the centre. The second line was not originally completed, and it

was formed after Champion had observed a body of the enemy on the opposite side of the *nālā* moving up towards the right of the allied army and fearing an attack on his rear, had ordered three battalions of sepoys from the left wing to face to the right and form a separate line behind the first. It was placed under the command of Major Eyres. The artillery was distributed in the entire front line over a mile in length from the Bohgul *nālā* to the village of Bhuria.

The Ruhela army was hastily formed and divided into three traditional parts, right, centre and left. The centre, composed of about ten thousand troops, was personally commanded by Hafiz, while the right and left wings were under Faizullah Khan and Mustaqim Khan respectively. Their disposition was not yet complete before their artillery, already stationed in front, began firing, and the allies opened fire in reply exactly at ten minutes to eight. The first to fire was the left division of the wazir's Najib *paltan* that had advanced from the allied left flank and taken up its position in the village in front according to a prearranged plan, and was nearest to the enemy who was about 600 yards off. These Najib battalions were, however, directed a little later to move to their left and take their post on the flank of the English left, "which they did", writes Macpherson, "with more regularity than could be expected."

By the time both the allied lines had been completely formed and the movement of the Najib *paltan* as given above had taken place, the Ruhelas were ready for attack and their rocketeers had advanced to the front of the opposing army. The cannonade on both the sides became brisk, and Champion now gave orders for the lines to advance slowly. While the orders were being transmitted to the various divisions, it was noticed that a large body of the Ruhelas was proceeding ahead under the cover of the tall shrubs on the bank of the *nālā*. Macpherson asked the wazir's Najib *paltan* and his cavalry on the right flank to push ahead and dislodge the advancing enemy. But as they refused to obey, a battalion under Ironside from the rear line was deputed to perform that service.

Having advanced to the right flank of the first line Ironside's troops discharged a number of shots which killed many of the Ruhelas, and then proceeding boldly dislodged them from their strong position and pursued them to such a long distance that it became necessary to recall them to the lines. They were, however, so much interested in the pursuit of the enemy that they could be brought back to their position with great difficulty. By this time the action became general and in addition to concentrating their artillery and rockets on the entire allied front, the Ruhelas under Faizullah and Mustaqim bravely made repeated attempts to charge the enemy right and left wings simultaneously, pouring at the same time murderous fire particularly on the enemy centre in order to divert his attention from the flanks. But the allied guns were much better served than the Ruhelas' and "kept up so constant and galling a fire that they could not advance and where they were closest there was greatest slaughter." Yet they would not yield, and made another highly strategic attempt to enfilade the grenadiers and in fact the whole of the allied right wing by mounting a battery of four guns at a spot on the other side of the Bohgul *nālā* where lies the modern village of Fatehganj Sharqi and keeping up an incessant fire from it and at the same time posting a good body of troops on the bank of the *nālā*, screened by tall grass, to rush them upon the allied right wing should it be thrown into confusion. The allied left wing, composed entirely of Basant's battalions, was similarly heavily engaged, but it faced the enemy as gallantly as the right wing. As the enemy showed signs of frustration, Champion ordered the lines to advance and also to redouble firing, and the Ruhelas fearing a powerful attack began to retreat in confusion. As the first line proceeded to attack, the battalions in the rear line crossed the Bohgul *nālā* and attacked the Ruhelas in charge of the battery with so much vigour that they retreated precipitately, abandoning their loaded guns upon the ground. The entire Ruhela army was now in the grip of a great panic and began fleeing in all directions, and Hafiz in a brave but vain attempt



to rally them received a cannon ball in his chest and fell dead in the field. The remnant of his followers took to their heels in confusion, leaving forty guns, many of their flags and all their tents with rich equipage except those valuables which they could carry away without much difficulty. The wazir's cavalry that had kept itself in the rear of the allied flanks of the first line now moved forward to pursue the retreating Ruhelas for plunder and got possession of horses, elephants, tents and other valuable things. The action had begun at ten minutes to eight and lasted till twenty minutes past ten, just two hours and a half.<sup>28</sup>

## 12. Shuja celebrates his victory.

The wazir, who was two <sup>29</sup> miles in the rear of the allied army, knelt down and bowed his head in prayer to the Almighty when he received the news of the victory over the principal enemy of his house. A little later Hafiz's head, severed from his body by Sultan Khan, brother of Murtaza Khan Bareech, was brought to him and after it was identified<sup>30</sup> by Zabita and Muzaffar Jang, Shuja ordered drums to beat in rejoicing. He handed over the Ruhela chief's head to Murtaza Khan for burial and placed Shah Madan, a notable Muslim divine, under arrest for calling Hafiz a martyr. Then he rode to the Ruhela camp and coming across Hafiz's dead body lying uncared for in the field he was moved, it is said, at the sight. But Salar Jang objecting said that it was not the time for sorrow, but of rejoicing, as Safdar Jang was avenged. On his

<sup>28</sup> *Soldiering in India* (best and most accurate), 191-194; Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., April 23, 24, 1774 (next best); C. P. C., IV. 1008, 1026; *Gentil*, 284-86 (generally accurate save a few details); D. C., 281; *Miskin*, (present), 295-96; *Bihari Lal*, 19; *Harcharan*, 513a and b; *Khair-ud-din*, 249-255; *Mirat*, 265b; *M. L.*, 154; *G. Ali*, III. 54-55; *Imad*, 115-16; *Siyar*, 937; *T.M.*, 265a; *Gulistan*, 114-117; *Gul.*, 135b-142b (the last two unreliable).

<sup>29</sup> *Gentil*, 285. Both Champion and Macpherson say that he was seven miles behind. Gentil too was present and seems to be right.

<sup>30</sup> Macpherson (*Soldiering in India*, 195) says that Shuja "taking the head by the beard showed it in triumph to the spectators."

arrival at the Ruhela encampment, he found Hafiz's tents still standing with most of their equipage in tact, although almost all the property of the fleeing Ruhelas was plundered and appropriated by the Mughals. Champion had already reached the Ruhela camp and secretly appropriated for himself, according to Gentil, two chests of Hafiz's treasure, and the wazir after meeting him there took his seat in the Ruhela chief's audience tents and received congratulations and presents from his friends and officers. After these formalities instructions were given for burying the dead bodies of both the sides and a body of cavalry was sent in pursuit of the enemy and for occupying Bareli and other principal towns in Ruhelkhand.<sup>31</sup> On return to his own camp in the afternoon the wazir rewarded his officers and distributed thousands of rupees among the dancing girls.<sup>32</sup>

### 13. The significance of the battle.

The battle of Miran Katra, though short, was sharp and decisive. Hereafter no organised attempt was made by the Ruhelas as a whole to challenge its verdict and regain any part of Ruhelkhand which passed, as a consequence of their defeat, into the hands of the wazir without any further resistance. Faizullah Khan's tactics at Lal-dang were purely defensive, and did neither aim at recovering the Ruhela State nor their military power. The sequel of the contest at Miran Katra was the breakdown of the Ruhela confederacy and the loss of their independence once and for all. Besides the loss of their leader Hafiz Rahmat, and some other men of note, two thousand Ruhelas lay dead on the field, and their total casualties in killed in the battle and as a result of pursuit and rising of zamindars against them amounted according to Champion's A.D.C. to five thousand, one-eighth of the total number they had brought into the field. They lost forty of their guns and all their equipage and valuables except what they had on their persons and perhaps their jewels. They lost

<sup>31</sup> *Khair-ud-din*, 255-256 ; *Gentil*, 285.

<sup>32</sup> *Imad*, 117.

their treasures and ornaments left in their homes. Hafiz's defeat is attributed by his son and grandson to the treachery and defection of several Ruhela chieftains who were reported to have joined the wazir before the battle. This statement of the Ruhela historians, like many others of the kind in which their works abound, is baseless. It is clear from Macpherson's diary that no such desertion took place either on the field of battle or during the course of the allied army's march to Miranpur Katra, and of all the Ruhela chieftains of note only Dunde Khan's sons remained neutral and did not take part in the battle. And those who joined Hafiz and took part in fighting were not half-hearted allies, but rendered a good account of themselves, and Champion had to pay a rich and well-deserved tribute to the courage, firmness, bravery and soldierly talent of the Ruhela troops and their leader. He wrote to Calcutta that they "gave proofs of a good share of military knowledge" and that "It is impossible to describe a more obstinate firmness of resolution than the enemy displayed....." The Ruhela defeat was not due to lukewarmness on the part of Hafiz's colleagues nor to treachery or defection of Hafiz's kinsmen. It was due to their having been outclassed in weapons, especially in field artillery. The Ruhelas were given no opportunity to charge with swords in hand, for the battle did not pass beyond the stage of an artillery duel, as the allied guns were the best then known to the country and so well-served that they easily made a short work of those of the Ruhelas who attempted to advance for a hand to hand attack.

#### **14. Champion's account of Shuja's conduct examined.**

Champion's despatch of 24th April 1774 is so drafted, and no doubt intentionally, as to produce the impression that Shuja not only did not cheerfully co-operate with the commander-in-chief but also created difficulties in the prosecution of the battle, that contrary to his promise he sent only a negligible number of his troops to join the English brigade, that these troops played no important part in the fighting,

that the victory was due solely to the va'our of the English army and that the wazir's troops fell to plundering as soon as the Ruhela army had turned its back. No historian has so far made a critical examination of these charges. But even a casual study of the diary of Champion's A.D.C., Allan Macpherson, gives the lie to some, if not all, of the above charges. Champion vaguely remarked in the letter referred to, that the wazir "promised solemnly to support me with all his force, and particularly engaged to be close at hand with a large body of cavalry to be used as I should direct.....". But Macpherson's account which is not only more specific but also more accurate records that it was settled that "our army followed by Bussent's [Basant Ali Khan's] battalions to begin the attack, and he [Shuja] would also send the Najib Fultan [paltan] and 2000 horse with us and follow with his whole army."<sup>33</sup> While Champion did not like to mention that the wazir sent that part of his army he had promised, Macpherson's account makes it absolutely clear that he fully discharged the promise and placed Basant's battalions, the Najib paltan and 2000 cavalry, numbering 18,000 in all, at the commander-in-chief's disposal. Considering the fact that the total English army, including Indian sepoys, was not, according to the highest computation, more than 7,200 strong, Shuja's contribution of 18,000 of his best troops was not insignificant or unreasonable. Although both Champion and Macpherson say that he remained standing with the main part of his army beyond the Gurra, we know from Gentil, who too was present with the wazir, that he was two miles<sup>34</sup> in the rear of the English army, which seems to be more reliable agreeing as it does with the versions given by contemporary Persian sources than the biased verdict of the two English officers who had a deep grudge against him. Moreover, the battle was over, contrary to expectations, just in 2½ hours and Champion who wanted the wazir to be nearby so that he could requisition the use of his fresh troops in case of necessity, did not ask

<sup>33</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 191.

<sup>34</sup> *Gentil*, 285,

for any further help. Had he asked for more troops and been refused Shuja would surely have been guilty of breach of faith. As regards the commander-in-chief's story of Shuja's refusal to give him "some particular pieces of cannon", it may be said that even Macpherson, to say nothing of other authorities, is silent on the point. though being his A.D.C. he should have been in the know of it, as the commander-in-chief had not personally asked the wazir for them but had "applied to him." Champion has not a word to say about the part played by the wazir's troops; but his A.D.C.'s stray remarks reveal that they displayed as much coolness and valour as the English and their contribution to the victory was equally great. The Najib paltan on the left flank was, according to him, the only part of the allied army that had marched to the farthest point from the lines to occupy a village about 600 yards from the enemy front, and it was the first to fire upon and engage the Ruhelas. When ordered to move to the left, it performed the duty, to use Macpherson's words, "with more regularity than could be expected." "Bassunt's five battalions," writes he, "from the good example given them by the regiment (immediately upon their right) behaved with remarkable steadiness and bravery. Indeed more than could be expected from troops who had no European officer at their head."<sup>35</sup> Macpherson's account is confirmed by the number of casualties suffered by the wazir's infantry. While the company's troops lost 123 men, Shuja's infantry <sup>36</sup> alone had 254 casualties, practically double those of the company's army and the late Sir John Strachey, who was unaware of the existence of Macpherson's diary, rightly suspecting, fifty years back, the English commander's partiality expressed the opinion "that it is probable that the Vizier's infantry took a larger share in the action than might

<sup>35</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 192 and 194.

<sup>36</sup> List of casualties enclosed with Champion's letter of 24th April 1774, vide Ben. Sec. Com., Vol. XXIV. p. 283.

No return of the casualties of Shuja's cavalry is given, though there must have been some.



be supposed from colonel Champion's despatch."<sup>37</sup> How correct this conjecture was is known to the readers of *Soldiering in India*. But no serious student of Indian history can endorse Strachey's remark that the "Brunt of the battle fell, as has always happened in our Indian wars, on the British troops", unless by British troops he means not only white troops but also the Indian sepoys in the company's service. At least so far as this battle was concerned, the wazir's trained infantry and next to them the Purbia infantry in the company's service who formed the right wing and the whole of the rear line bore the brunt of fighting and suffered the largest casualties. And the same is true about the other battles described in the first volume of this work. Similarly Champion's observation that "Their (Ruhela's) camp equipage.....with whatever effects they could not carry off, fell a sacrifice to the ravages of the Nabob's people....." is open to criticism; firstly because it was only the wazir's cavalry, 2,000 in number, that became responsible for plundering, as is quite clear from Macpherson's diary, and his infantry (16,000 strong) remained standing in regular order after the victory like the most English troops, and Champion's use of "the Nabob's people" is unfortunate and misleading; and secondly, because it is exaggerated inasmuch as the enemy camp with most of its equipage was not touched by the Mughal cavalry and passed into the wazir's possession.<sup>38</sup> One cannot think well of Champion for having intentionally omitted to mention both in the said despatch and in subsequent letters the fact that his own troops too took part in plundering as soon as the battle was over—a fact communicated to Hastings by Middleton, the only difference between the two groups of plunderers being that while Shuja's cavalry looted the enemy, Champion's troops fell on the property of their ally the wazir's dependants and officers.<sup>39</sup> Finally the

<sup>37</sup> *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 141.

<sup>38</sup> *Khair-ud-din*, 254.

<sup>39</sup> Middleton to Hastings, June 2, 1774, quoted in Strachey's *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, p. 161.

commander-in-chief's charge of "his (Shuja's) shameful pusillanimity", though it has misled many an English writer, must be lightly dismissed by one who has made a careful study of the valiant part played by the wazir in the battles he had to fight, specially those of Panch-pahari and Buxar on the basis of the observations made by contemporary English officers, and also by readers of this and the previous volume, as malicious fabrication.<sup>40</sup> Champion's attitude towards Shuja was far from friendly from the very beginning of the campaign and now their relations had almost reached the breaking point owing to the English commander's disappointment in not getting a share in the spoils of the victory and the unbecoming conduct of his troops in falling upon the wazir's officers and dependants on the day of the battle and plundering away their effects for which they were not brought to book. This explains the fact that full one-fourth of Champion's despatch of 24th April was devoted to a censure of Shuja's conduct, while the remaining three-fourth to a description of the battle, behaviour of the British officers and troops, his recommendation for rewarding them and to the plundering activity of the wazir's cavalry, —a censure that ended with the significant sentence, "I have been thus particular with regard to the Vizier's conduct that it may be better known how to deal with him in future." It may interest the readers to know that Champion's injustice was not confined to Shuja and his troops. Many of those white officers and troops, such as Leslie, Ironside, Hannay, etc., who had distinguished themselves most in the battle were passed over in silence and were not commended to the government, "while," remarks an indignant Englishman, "a parcel of Scotch Aid-de-camps, retainers to Mr. Graham, and who were forced into Champion's family, were recommended for carrying half a dozen orders and messages. What excellent encouragement."<sup>41</sup> One might add : What excellent justice !

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence, a critical and judicious writer, does not believe that Shuja was a coward. See *Essays on the Indian Army and Oude*, pp. 308-309.

<sup>41</sup> *Soldiering in India*, p. 201 n.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE OCCUPATION OF RUHELKHAND : LAST DAYS OF SHUJA

#### 1. The failure of Naim's Bundelkhand expedition.

The celebration of the victory over Hafiz was marred by the news of a reverse that Shuja's arms had, on the very day of his success at Miran Katra, suffered in an expedition against Bundelkhand. After his conquest of Etawah the wazir had invited Rene Madec from Gohad, taken him in his service and had with his help planned an expedition against Kalpi and the neighbouring districts that were still in the hands of the Marathas, his policy being to bring them under his possession, as owing to dissensions at Poona the Maratha agents in the north were insulated and left to shift for themselves. He had won over the Rana of Gohad who paid a visit to the wazir at Etawah and received the title of 'son'. When the preparations were complete Naim Khan, a commander of Sabit Khani battalions, was nominated to undertake the campaign. He was honoured with the title of Naim-ud-daulah Sabit Jung and despatched along with Madec, at the head of 30,000 horse and foot. As rumours magnified his might and numbers, Gangadhar and Balaji, sons of the late Govind Pant Bundele, then in charge of the fort and district of Kapli, were filled with consternation, and having evacuated the fort fell back in the interior of the country. The invader having arrived meanwhile, they gave him battle somewhere near Kalpi, and though the contest was altogether unequal, the Maratha army being only 2,700 strong, while the enemy more than thirty thousand, they succeeded in inflicting a decisive defeat on Naim and putting him to flight across the Jamuna.

Notwithstanding assistance from the Rana of Gohad Naim retired in great confusion to the indignation of the wazir whose pride was so much hurt that for a day he seriously thought of blowing the defeated commander from a gun and himself proceeding against Bundelkhand to avenge himself and chastise Govind Pant's sons for their audacity. But the idea had to be given up in view of the absolute necessity of completing the subjugation of Ruhelkhand without loss of time. Naim was forgiven and Basant with his battalions was deputed to cross the Jamuna, occupy Ater and prevent the Bundelas from taking advantage of their recent success and creating disturbance in the wazir's territory. It seems that Basant performed the mission and returned to his master before the Ruhelkhand expedition was over.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Faizullah flees to Lal-dang.

Immediately after Hafiz fell in the field, the entire Ruhela army followed the lead of Faizullah Khan, the eldest surviving son of Ali Muhammad Khan, and now leader and chief of the tribe, and fled in precipitation, pursued hotly by the wazir's cavalry both for plunder and military advantage. The Hindu population that had lived under an unwilling subjection to this alien race for about forty years rose against the fleeing Ruhelas, fell on them and stripped them of their belongings. A large number of the refugees in this manner fell under the sword of the neighbouring zamindars. Faizullah, however, with many thousands of his followers managed to reach Rampur in safety, and from there taking his family and whatever valuables and other property he could, he retreated rapidly, *via* Muradabad and Najibabad, to the hills and took refuge at Lal-dang. Here he was soon joined by the remnant of Hafiz's army and other Ruhelas and their families and made an improvised arrangement for defending himself. Among officers and men of note who reached Lal-dang were, besides

<sup>1</sup> *Imad*, 117-118 ; C. P. C., IV. 1044 ; *Madec*, II. 50.

Faizullah, Ahmad Khan Bakhshi, Ahmad Khan Khan-i-Saman, Mustaqim Khan, Muhammad Hassan, Abdul Jabbar Khan, Saif-ud-din Khan and Mulla Mir Baz Khan.

Some other notable chieftains, on the other hand, chose to stay at home, afraid of proceeding to Lal-dang or to any other place of safety owing to the hostile attitude of the zamindars who infested the roads. Muhammad Yar Khan, younger brother of Faizullah, remained at Aonla. Dunde Khan's sons Mahibullah Khan, Fatehullah Khan and Azimullah Khan, who had already entered into a secret agreement with Shuja, went to their residence at Bisauli, and Hafiz's sons fled to Pilibhit. Zulfiqar Khan, who was put in charge of Bareli by Hafiz, stuck to his post and on hearing of the disaster of Miran Katra gathered the gentry of the town in order to send a deputation to wait on the wazir and beg quarter for the inhabitants. Some of the above-mentioned persons expected a favourable treatment from the victor, while certain others were not inspired by any such hopes and yet they could not help staying where they were.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Shuja occupies Bareli and Pilibhit.

The allies passed the night following the battle and also the next day on the field, when the dead were buried and the wounded of both the sides were attended to. All this time the pursuit of the fleeing enemy was maintained and the wazir's cavalry took possession of Bareli at 10 o'clock during the night of 23rd April without any opposition. On the 24th one of Hafiz's sons came to Miran Katra of his own accord and delivered himself up to Shuja. The allies began their march towards Pilibhit at half past three in the morning of the 25th. A coolness had sprung up between the wazir and Champion, because of Shuja's giving preference in his attention to Middleton, the English troops' falling on the effects of the wazir's men on the 23rd and the jealousy of the commander-in-chief for

<sup>2</sup> *Gulistan*, 121.



Shuja who had not shared with him the booty in Hafiz's camp. The breach went on increasing from day to day till it degenerated into personal bitterness and bickering, and Champion's dislike and jealousy of the wazir spread to his A.D.C. and the entire rank and file of the white army. As early as 24th April Macpherson wished that Hafiz's son instead of submitting to the wazir should have sought Champion's protection, and the English disliked Shuja's troops marching or passing near their lines. "I myself proposed," recorded Macpherson on 25th, "to the Colonel not to suffer the Nabob to march in our front." Champion wrote angrily to Shuja who had to agree to the former's desire that his troops should either march in front or behind the English army, but there must be at least one day's gap between them. Accordingly the English halted that day and the wazir's army continued marching and on 26th its vanguard consisting of the two companies of the Najib paltran took possession of Pilibhit, including Hafiz's residence with his women and seven sons, the city having been evacuated by all Ruhela troops a little time before their arrival. It was proclaimed by beat of drums that the city was taken possession of on behalf of Shah Alam and that the inhabitants would be given every protection, if they remained quiet. On the 28th both Champion and Shuja arrived at Pilibhit and the English commander immediately sent two companies of sepoy grenadiers under two English officers to take possession of the gates of the city as a preliminary step to have a share in Hafiz's treasure and these men having entered Pilibhit began committing violence and oppression<sup>3</sup> upon the inhabitants. Then he sent word to the wazir that he was despatching some English officers to examine on behalf of the company the treasury of Hafiz and he was free to depute his own men for the purpose. Greatly surprised and offended, Shuja immediately went to see Champion and told him how unreasonable it was to claim anything over and above the salary of the brigade and the sum of.

<sup>3</sup> C. P. C., IV. 1036.

forty lakhs as agreed upon between him and Hastings. But Champion would not listen and on the plea that the king of England always gave to the troops whatever money and other things were found in the conquered places he sent his officers to examine and take charge of Hafiz's treasure. He held out a threat that if the officers were prevented from going to Pilibhit, the English troops would plunder and lay the entire country waste and also became guilty of addressing the wazir in a manner derogatory to his high rank. However, Shuja was not in a position to prevent the audacity on the part of the commander-in-chief and the episode came to an end, as the officers deputed came back without getting anything of value in the Ruhela chief's treasury.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. Shuja marches to Bisauli.

After two days' halt at Pilibhit during which the town and the district were settled Shuja, preceded by the English army, started for Bareilly on the 30th, taking with him Hafiz's wives, sons and other dependants. The Ruhela chief's sons rode on horses or elephants, while the women and children were carried in forty-five covered carriages. The Ruhelas were conscious of the English being the real power behind the wazir and of the strained relations between the latter and the commander-in-chief and therefore they preferred to place their grievances, some genuine while others exaggerated and imaginary, before Champion and even before ordinary English officers, over the head of Shuja-ud-daulah. The English would not only welcome such complaints but even encouraged the Ruhelas to come and throw themselves on Champion's mercy instead of making their terms directly with the wazir who naturally resented such proceedings and became cold towards the commander-in-chief and stiff towards the Ruhelas. Space forbids the recounting of unbecoming sentiments and extravagant remarks recorded in the pages of Macpherson's

<sup>4</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 205-206 ; C. P. C., IV. 1036, 1062 ; *Gulistan*, 122-23.

diary, such as, Shuja "*will most certainly destroy the race of Haffies*" which were belied by the subsequent history of the campaign and were not so much inspired by feelings of humanity as by those of ill-will against the wazir. These served to widen the gulf between Shuja and Champion and hampered the operations. However, on 3rd May the allies reached Bareilly which had already been occupied by the wazir's cavalry during the night following the battle of Miran Katra, and it did not take many days to establish regular administration in the district. It was considered necessary to take immediate steps to settle the western Ruhelkhand and to prevent Najaf Khan, who was on his way from Delhi, from interfering with the wazir's plans and demanding a share in the conquest, and therefore the allies crossed the Ramganga on the 5th and arrived at Aonla on the 6th. On both the days there was a vulgar scene between the wazir's troops and those of Champion about the order of their march and the places of their encampment, and the English commander wrote angrily to Shuja to keep his artillery and troops in the rear of the English army which was complied with by the latter. The English were further piqued by the wazir's refusal to dismiss the French from his service. "I advised," writes Macpherson, "to remove the insolent French vagabonds, but this was not attended to." After a day's halt at Aonla the wazir resumed his journey and arrived at Bisauli, 15 miles west of the former town, in the afternoon of the 7th. Bisauli was plundered by two battalions of the nawab's army and Mahibullah Khan, son of Dunde Khan, was confined in his own house. The wazir made a show of punishing the troops of the said battalions but did nothing beyond making them disgorge their plunder which amounted to a considerable sum, 300 to 500 gold mohars, being found in the possession of each soldier. Arrangements were now made for appointing *amils* and establishing garrisons in western Ruhelkhand and as summer was far advanced and rainy season at hand it was decided to canton the

army at Bisauli.<sup>5</sup>

### 5. A Secret treaty between Shuja and Najaf.

It will be recalled that Shah Alam had set out from his capital on 5th April in response to his wazir's appeal to lead the imperial forces against the rebellious Ruhelas but had to return from Ghaziabad owing to illness, deputing Najaf Khan to help Shuja in the war. Accompanied by Elich Khan, the wazir's premier, he started from Shahdara on 22nd April and had not yet covered more than a few stages when news reached him of Hafiz's defeat and death. Yet Najaf continued his journey and met the wazir at Bisauli on 9th May and was cordially received. He claimed one half of Ruhelkhand on behalf of his master in fulfilment of the terms of the secret treaty entered into between Shuja and Shah Alam ; but as the imperial troops had not arrived in time to participate in the battle of Miran Katra, the wazir naturally did not agree to part with any part of his newly conquered territory. Hastings too, in spite of Champion's inclination to seize the opportunity of interfering, refused to meddle in the matter, firstly because he and the council had no knowledge of the said treaty and secondly because they were dissatisfied with the emperor who had taken Samru in his service and was hostile to the English.<sup>6</sup> Najaf too, being overwhelmed by the wazir's royal reception and uncommon attention, did not press the proposal, and the two notables came to an understanding regarding their respective territorial ambitions. It was settled that the whole of Ruhelkhand including Zabita Khan's paternal estate, enclosed by the eastern bank of the Ganges, should belong to Shuja, besides the lower and mid-Doab which had for some time been a debatable land between the Marathas and the Ruhelas but had recently been annexed

<sup>5</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 206-211 ; *Gulistan*, 123 ; C.P.C., IV. 1080 (exaggerated), 1106, 1118.

<sup>6</sup> Ben. Sec. Cons., 23rd May and 3rd June, 1774 ; C. P. C., IV. 1152 ; Fifth Report App. 27 ; Forrest, *Selections etc.*, Vol. I. 106 ; D. C., 282.

to Oudh. On the other hand, the whole of the upper Doab consisting of the districts of Bulandshahr, Muzaffarnagar, Mirath and Agra, except Saharanpur which was Zabita's estate and was contemplated to be left to him, was to belong to the emperor and to be under Najaf's management. Similarly the country west of the upper half of the Jamuna comprising Panipat, Sonapat, Rohtak, Hansi and Hisar, was recognised as under Najaf's sphere with which the wazir had nothing to do. The above territorial arrangement, which was kept a close secret, was highly advantageous to Oudh and besides definitely reducing Zabita and Muzaffar to the status of petty vassals of the wazir, circumscribed Najaf's ambition and vision in the east to the western bank of the Ganges and in the south to the district of Agra. Moreover it secured the safety of the line of his frontier on the south-west from Anupshahr on the Ganges to a point on the Jamuna some miles east of Agra, the only line in the west vulnerable to attack from a foreign enemy. The conference ended with Shuja's recognition of Najaf as one of the most outstanding personalities in northern India and with the betrothal of the wazir's daughter to him. Following the Indian custom the wazir took a diamond ring from his finger, put it on that of Najaf and celebrated the occasion with rejoicings. On the conclusion of the ceremony Najaf returned to Delhi, reaching there on 12th June.<sup>7</sup>

#### 6. The Ruhela prisoners sent to Allahabad.

By the middle of May practically the whole of Ruhelkhand was brought under subjection and there remained no notable enemy in arms except Faizullah Khan who was seeking refuge in the hills on the northern outskirt of his homeland. There was no danger of an immediate outbreak and therefore improvised barracks of mud and straw were erected at Bisauli for shelter during the rains. Hafiz's family and dependants were despatched on 26th May under the custody

<sup>7</sup> *Khair-ud-din*, 257; *Siyar*, III. 938-39; *Maadan*, IV. 255b; *Ghulam Ali*, III. 57; *M. L.*, 155; *Mirat*, 265b; *Soldiering in India*, 210.



of Salar Jang to Allahabad to be lodged in the fort there, the Ruhela chief's widow travelling in a palanquin presented to her by Bahu Begam and her sons riding on elephants, while others had carriages for their conveyances. On 28th Mahibullah Khan, Fatehullah Khan and Azimullah Khan, sons of Dunde Khan, and their children and ladies were sent as prisoners to join the party under Salar Jang. Shuja had a deeprooted grudge against Dunde who had betrayed rancorous animosity and misbehaviour towards the ruling family of Oudh, especially during Shuja's flight in Ruhelkhand after the disaster of Buxar, and the wazir satisfied his spite by being particularly severe to the progeny of that Ruhela chief. His wrath was deepened by their attempt to secrete their treasure and to pass on considerable sums of money and jewels to two of the English officers,<sup>8</sup> and he instituted a search under his personal supervision for Dunde Khan's treasure, deprived his sons' wives and other ladies of the house of their cash and jewellery and sent them to be confined in the Allahabad fort.<sup>9</sup>

### 7. Faizullah seeks Champion's intercession.

Soon after the allies had arrived at Bisauli on 7th May their spies brought the reports that Faizullah had taken shelter at Laldang, 17 miles north of Najibabad, a strategically situated place at the foot of the Garhwal mountains and sheltered by a chain of hills and belt of dense forest. Ruhela fugitives from all parts of the province, paralysed by the reports of Hafiz's defeat, had flocked to Laldang and Faizullah soon found himself at the head of a respectable force. But he shrank from engaging in another deadly conflict with a superior enemy and towards the end of May opened negotiations with Champion to whom he made two alternative offers, if he were placed in possession of the whole of Ruhelkhand, namely, payment of eighty lakhs of rupees in three

<sup>8</sup> Middleton to Hastings, 17th June, 1774, *vide Hastings and the Rohilla War*, pp. 209-10.

<sup>9</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 220-222 ; *Gulistan*, 125.

years either to the company or the wazir, or an annual tribute of thirty lakhs to the wazir and a lump sum of twenty five lakhs to the English, if the latter guaranteed the proposed treaty. He further promised to attend the wazir and the English with 15,000 troops whenever he was required to do so. But in spite of Champion's desire to the contrary these terms were disdainfully rejected not only by Shuja but also by Hastings who wished the wazir to acquire the whole of Ruhelkhand for a scientific frontier on his western border. Faizullah therefore attempted to bargain for a portion of the province and implored Champion's protection, offering to pay the wazir twenty lakhs for a jagir yielding six to eight lakhs per annum. But Shuja, though he raised no objection to the English commander's protecting Faizullah's person, refused to reinstate him in any part of Ruhelkhand even for a krur and wanted his absolute submission and all his wealth. He detached some of his troops to pursue the Ruhela fugitives so as to prevent them from swelling Faizullah's ranks.<sup>10</sup>

### 8. The allies proceed against Faizullah.

It was reported on 17th June that Laldang being very unhealthy Faizullah was marching to take possession of Pathargarh before the rains. Similar other reports about the activity of the Ruhela chief, of his fast swelling strength and of the encouragement he was receiving from the emperor seem to have arrived in quick succession and impelled the wazir to take immediate steps for the reduction of the fugitives. But Champion was averse to campaigning during the rainy season, especially against such an inaccessible and strongly fortified place as Laldang. Although the wazir referred the

<sup>10</sup> Champion to Hastings and Council, May 16, 1477 ; Fifth Report, App. 27 ; *Soldiering in India*, 211.

Najm-ul-Ghani, *vide Akhbar-ul-Sanadid*, II pp. 540-41, says that Champion was supported by Hastings and the committee that it was not proper to march against Faizullah, but the wazir won over Champion by feasts and presents. The first of the above statement is contrary to truth.

commander-in-chief's objection to Hastings, a reply from him was likely to cause delay and therefore he promised a handsome donation to the English army which had been openly clamouring for a share in the spoils, and silenced their murmurs. The allied troops now set out from Bisauli and in the first week of August Shuja announced a donation of seven lakhs for the English army and three lakhs for Champion, and the latter, while applying to the governor for his permission to accept the seven lakhs, withheld from him and the council the information of the three lakhs intended for him. The government of Fort William did not permit the acceptance of the donations and requested the wazir to postpone the grant to a more favourable time, when it should have the appearance of a voluntary gift; but as the nawab's situation demanded an immediate allaying of the discontent of the English troops, he could not safely accept Hasting's advice.<sup>11</sup>

By 26th August the allies arrived near Pathargarh, one mile east of Najibabad and only 17 miles short of Laldang. The wazir took advantage of this journey by establishing military posts and appointing revenue collectors in the conquered territory. He requested Zabita Khan to deliver the forts of Najibabad and Pathargarh into the hands of his men; the measure being necessary, he said, owing to the close proximity of the forts to the enemy and promised their restoration after the war. Zabita complied with the request and sent his family and treasure across the Ganges to Ghausgarh.<sup>12</sup> Thus the entire province of Ruhelkhand, including its northernmost corner, came into the possession of the wazir who appointed Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan

<sup>11</sup> Champion to Hastings and the Board, 8th August, 1774; the Board to Champion, 29th August, 1774, *vide* Ben Sec. Com. 29th Aug. 1774; C.P.C., IV. 1208, 1238; Middleton to Hastings, Aug. 7, 1774, *vide* Strachey's *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 162-3; Forrest's *Selections*, I. 1158. The C. D. permitted the acceptance of the donation 12 years later and the money was divided among the officers and troops, C.P.C., IV. 1227, 234.

<sup>12</sup> *Bihari Lal*, 19.

Faujdar of Najibabad district and commandant of the forts.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile negotiations were proceeding with Faizullah through Ensign J. Murray, and the wazir, though not privately disinclined to assign a small portion of Ruhelkhand to the fugitive chief, no doubt owing to the lukewarm attitude of the English troops, did not authorise Champion to bring the matter to a conclusion. The commander-in-chief would not proceed further, as Laldang lay beyond the northern boundary of Ruhelkhand which he was not authorised to cross. The Fort William authorities, however, promptly directed Champion "to pursue the most vigorous measures in conjunction with the Vizier effectually to reduce the Rohilla army without confining your operations to the Rohilla dominions" and even to cross the Ganges with a part or the whole of his army in order "speedily to terminate the war by acting decisively against them and obliging them to disperse....." He was further instructed to leave all negotiations to the wazir and on no account to allow anybody under his command "to be employed as a negotiator on the part of the Vizier."<sup>14</sup> Therefore preparations were made to push on to Laldang.

### 9 —The Ruhela Position at Laldang described.

The slope at Laldang where the Ruhela encampment was set up was designed by Nature to be an ideal place of defence against a superior enemy. The spot lay at the foot of the Garhwal mountains, 1232 feet above the sea level, was fortified by two hills, one on each flank and sheltered in front by a natural embankment, 14 to 16 feet high and over 400 yards long, behind which Faizullah and his men had taken up their position. The fugitives were encamped on both the banks of a river that flew between the two hills on their flanks. On both the corners of the natural embank-

<sup>13</sup> *Harcharan*, 514 b ; *Maadan*, IV. 254 b.

<sup>14</sup> Champion to Board, Aug. 26, 1774 ; Hastings to Champion, September 16, and the Board to Champion, Sept., 17 and 19, 1774 ; C.P.C., IV. 1253, 1254.

ment the Ruhelas threw up entrenchments, erecting low earthen walls and digging ditches. Barring a small open space of irregular breadth in front of the embankment the entire region south of it as far as Najibabad was covered by a dense jungle, consisting of large trees interspersed with bamboos, thorny bushes and prickly long grass (*kāns*) through which was cut a narrow passage leading to the foot of the hill on the left flank of the Ruhela entrenchment. But the utility of the place was marred by its unhealthiness owing to which the Ruhelas suffered greatly. They were also in great distress for want of provisions, as the supplies from the plain below were cut off by the allied troops.<sup>15</sup> For these reasons it was not possible for Faizullah to stand a long siege, and the only alternative to submission were either to fall desperately on the superior enemy and be cut to pieces or retreat further into the country between the hills.

#### 10.—Shuja reaches near Laldang.

As the negotiations had proved futile despite many proposals and counter-proposals, the allies kept on advancing in a north-westerly direction from Najibabad and leaving Mohanpur on 28th September, arrived on the 30th at a spot near the eastern bank of the Ganges and north of the village Nagal, within 8 miles of Laldang. The necessity of having a good road to transport heavy artillery obliged them to clear the jungle and construct a passage leading to the centre of the Ruhela position. Fortunately as the troops advanced further, they found the forest less dense, the space between trees larger and fewer bamboos, but the grass was as high as that they had left behind. On 1st October Champion went on a reconnaissance ride about three miles along the road made by the Ruhelas and "found it extremely good" and the jungle on either hand so open "that he decided to push on to the foot of the enemy entrenchment without delay. Accordingly the army set out early in the morning of the 2nd and

<sup>15</sup> Champion to Ben. Sec. Com., 26th September, 1774.



marched three miles. The English advance-post proceeding further north established itself within a mile of the Ruhela earth-work which was erected on the road at a little distance from their entrenchment.<sup>16</sup>

### 11.—The treaty with Faizullah Khan.

On 30th September Champion had written to Faizullah inviting him to submit and avoid the conflict. The Ruhela chief, whose main object was to procure from the stronger enemy as advantageous terms as possible, had no stomach for fighting, as his men were dying of hunger and sickness. In compliance with the wazir's request the rajah of Kamaon had changed his attitude of helpfulness towards the fugitives and Najaf had sent some troops under Afrasiab Khan to the western bank of the Ganges near Hardwar to cut off grain supplies for Laldang. So Faizullah took the opportunity for the resumption of negotiations and sent his wakil on 1st October to wait on Champion who, though equally anxious for a cessation of hostilities, pushed on with rapidity with a detachment of his force to near Laldang in order to compel the fugitive chief to give up bargaining and make up his mind about the terms. The commander-in-chief's policy bore the expected result and his message (sent through the Ruhela wakil on 2nd October) that he would be glad to see Faizullah Khan met with a ready response. Two hours after the message was delivered a Ruhela officer came to inform that Faizullah was coming and he actually arrived at about 12 A.M. at the spot where the main body of the English was encamped and which was about four miles behind the allied advance-post. He was cordially received by Champion who took him to the wazir the next morning (3rd Oct.). Shuja received Faizullah "with much propriety" and presented him with a dress of honour and some other articles. This was followed by exchange of ceremonious visits and diplomatic talks which resulted in an understanding on the 6th. The next day

<sup>16</sup> Champion to Ben. Sec. Com., Sept. 30 ; Oct. 1, 2, 1774.

(7th) a formal treaty was drawn up and signed and sealed by the contracting parties and attested by Champion.<sup>17</sup>

The treaty was divided into two parts and consisted of the following provisions. Firstly, Faizullah Khan was given the district of Rampur and the *parganahs* dependent thereon, "producing altogether an annual revenue of 14,75,000 rupees." Secondly, he was to "retain in his service 5,000 men, and not a single man more." Thirdly, he was to "enter into no connection with any power but myself [Shuja] and that he shall hold no correspondence with any person except the English chiefs. Fourthly, he was to consider the wazir's friends as his friends and the wazir's enemies as his enemies. Fifthly, whenever Shuja went to war with any power, Faizullah was to "send 2,000 or 3,000 men according to his ability to join my [Shuja's] forces"; and if the wazir marched in person, Faizullah was to accompany him with his troops, "and if on account of the smallness of the number of the force he is to retain in his service, he is not able to accompany me [the wazir], I will then appoint him three or four thousand more troops, that he may accompany me with a good army, and I will be at the expense of supporting them." Sixthly, "he [Faizullah] shall send the remainder [excess of 5,000] of the Rohillas [troops] on the other side of the river." And finally, the wazir bound himself to promote Faizullah's interest and advantage to the utmost of his power, if the Ruhela chief faithfully observed the above terms.

In a separate agreement under his hand and seal Faizullah Khan solemnly promised to strictly abide by all the terms of the treaty and that "I will always, while I live, continue in submission and obedience to the Nabob Vizier.....and that whatever the Nabob Vizier directs, I will execute, and that I will at all times and on all occasions, both in adversity and prosperity, continue his firm associate."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., Oct. 2, 3, 6, 8, 1774.

<sup>18</sup> Copy of the treaty under Shuja's seal and that under Faizullah's seal, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., Vol. XXV. pp. 279—283; C.P.C., IV. 1858; S.P.D., XXIX. 280, 281.

Faizullah promised to deliver half of his treasure and effects to the wazir ; but this term was not mentioned in the treaty. It was estimated that the total value of the Ruhela chief's treasure and property was in the neighbourhood of thirty lakhs and the wazir preferred to accept fifteen lakhs in cash to dividing his effects.<sup>19</sup>

## 12.—Shuja returns to Faizabad ; the settlement of Ruhelkhand.

On the day following the conclusion of the treaty the wazir withdrew his troops from their position south-west of Laldang and the English drew off on the 9th. On 14th October Shuja's share in the treasure and effects of Faizullah having been settled at fifteen lakhs and the boundaries of the jagir given to the latter finally defined, the wazir set out towards Bisauli *en-route* for Faizabad, while Champion stayed on for a few days more so as to see that the Ruhelas in arms, who could not be employed by Faizullah nor absorbed in the wazir's service, quitted Ruhelkhand and crossed the Ganges in his presence. Faizullah went back to Laldang on the 15th after seeing the wazir off, to make arrangements for the payment of fifteen lakhs to the latter's men and for returning to Ruhelkhand to take possession of Rampur. The payment was made to Elich Khan who took leave of the Ruhela chief and Champion on 23rd October to join his master, while the commander-in-chief and Faizullah quitted their respective encampments, the one for Ramghat and the other for Rampur.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., Oct. 14, 1774 ; S.P.D., XXIX. 280.

I have carefully read Dr. A. F. M. Khalil-ur-Rahman's article, "Shuja-ud-Daula as a Diplomat" (1765—1775) in *Indian Culture* Vol. IX. But I do not see the slightest reason to modify any of my conclusions, though these chapters were written 1½ years before the publication of the above article. The curious reader is requested to read these pages side by side with Dr. Rahman's and to see for himself as to whose conclusions are more scientific and impartial.

<sup>20</sup> Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., Oct. 8, 14, 23 and Nov. 14, 1774 ; Middleton to Hastings, Oct. 14, 1774 ; Shuja to Hastings, received on

At Bisauli the wazir made a brief halt for settling the country and making a permanent arrangement for its administration. He had already appointed Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan to the charge of northern Ruhelkhand, consisting of Najibabad, Pathargarh and other districts that had until his successful campaign belonged to Zabita Khan, and he was now honoured by the bestowal on him of the insignia of the Fish (*mahi-maratib*) and of the privilege of playing state music (*naubat*), besides a fringed palanquin. The Khan made Pathargarh his headquarters with a garrison of 5,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry. The wazir established three more garrisons at important places in the remaining parts of the conquered territory, one of 4,000 infantry and 500 cavalry at Bisauli, another of four to five thousand foot and 500 horse at Aonla and the third of four to five thousand infantry and three to four thousand cavalry at Bareli. Bareli became the new capital of Ruhelkhand and here Mirza Saadat Ali Khan, the wazir's second son, who was appointed governor of the province, took up his residence with Murtaza Khan and Gopal Rao as his advisers. For purposes of revenue collection the conquered *subah* was divided into three parts and was farmed out to three personages, one of whom was Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan, for an annual sum of sixty-five lakhs. Having completed the above arrangements the wazir with his family, which had been lodged at Bisauli during his absence in the Laldang campaign, quitted Ruhelkhand once and for all. On the way he appointed Anup Giri Gosain as deputy governor of the entire mid-Doab in his possession (districts of Etawah, Etah, Mainpuri, etc., right upto Ramghat on the Ganges and the boundary of Agra) and farming it out to him for an annual

Nov. 5, 1774; C.P.C., IV. 1381. In these dates there is one day's discrepancy between the Hijri and Christian calculations.

According to the Maratha wakil, who was all along present at the wazir's camp and whose reports in other particulars are corroborated from other sources, Champion accepted five to six lakhs of rupees from Faizullah as the price of the service he rendered to the latter during the negotiations. See S. P. D., XXIX. 280.

sum of fifty-one lakhs of rupees, payable in eleven instalments. At the ceremony of leave-giving on 30th October the Gosain chief was given, besides other rewards, elephants and the state kettledrums with the right to play them in the wazir's camp. With his mind at rest regarding the administration of his new acquisitions, the wazir continued his journey; but he was obliged to stay for some days at Lucknow owing to illness. When there appeared no marked improvement in his condition, he thought it better to hasten to Faizabad where he arrived on 15th December, 1774 and was given a rousing reception by the citizens.<sup>21</sup>

### 13.—The value of the spoils acquired by Shuja.

No history of the Ruhela war can be complete without an examination of the various reports about the spoils in cash and kind that Shuja-ud-daulah was said to have acquired. The Persian and Marathi sources speak only in general terms about the immense booty that fell into the wazir's hands and therefore the student has to confine his enquiry to the biased observations of Champion, the diary of his A.D.C. Macpherson and the very meagre information contained in the letters of Middleton and Maclean. In his despatch of 24th April announcing victory over Hafiz, Champion did not mention any treasure coming into the hands of the wazir, and only referred to his troops falling on the enemy's treasure and effects and appropriating them like bandits. On 28th April he informed the committee that it was reported that Pilibhit contained a treasure of four krons in cash and therefore he had sent some of his officers to take an inventory of the same so as to claim a share in it. How baseless the reports were and how credulous the commander-in-chief can be judged from the fact that the said officers returned in

<sup>21</sup> S. P. D., XXIX. 280, 281 and 282 (the last not being very accurate); *Harcharan*, 514b; *Imad*, 118; *Maadan*, IV. 258a. The date of arrival according to *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad* (Vol. II. p. 18) is 16th December; but here again *Harcharan's* date is more reliable.



the evening without finding any treasure.<sup>22</sup> "Since the defeat of the Rohillas", wrote Champion on 16th May, "the Nabob has plundered the whole country ; in so much that in Peelybheer, Bareilly, Onlah and Bisouly he has found jewels and money, above and underground, elephants, camels, horses and other effects, to the value, I am confident, of above fifty lacks of rupees, besides what the individuals of his army have possessed themselves of, and if he can lay hold of Fayzulla Cawn's treasure and effects, his acquisitions in ready money etc. will exceed a crore of rupees."<sup>23</sup> And he informed the government that Faizullah Khan's treasure "at most modest account is seventy-five lacks hard cash", besides his jewels, ornaments and other valuables which must amount to much more.<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that the commander-in-chief himself had to correct his wild and fanciful guesses of 16th May in a subsequent report (14th October) when he communicated to the Fort William authorities that Faizullah's entire treasure and effects were estimated at thirty lakhs and that the wazir accepted the estimate and took fifteen lakhs.<sup>25</sup> According to Champion's final account prepared for him by Macpherson the total plunder acquired by the wazir was over 150 lakhs.<sup>26</sup> It is certain that after his acquisitions at Pilibhit, Bareli, Aonla and Bisauli which Champion puts at "above fifty lacks", Shuja got no further spoils from any part of Ruhelkhand except rupees fifteen lakhs from Faizullah Khan, and even if the English commander-in-chief's estimate of 16th May may be taken as correct, his total acquisitions should have been sixty-five lakhs and not 150 lakhs. One of the two estimates is wrong, and obviously the latter.

<sup>22</sup> Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., April 28, 1774 ; Shuja's letter to Hastings, received on 23rd May, *vide* C. P. C., IV. 1036 ; *Soldiering in India*, 206.

<sup>23</sup> Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., May 16, 1774, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons. 3rd June, 1774.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Champion to Com., 14th Oct. 1774, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., Nov. 7, 1774.

<sup>26</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 229 ; *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 171.

Anyway, Champion's reports and estimates are extravagant and unreliable and seem to have been inspired by considerations other than regard for accuracy and truth. Middleton's estimate of seventy-five lakhs seems to be nearer the truth, despite the fact that Shuja put his acquisitions at less than forty and told the English Resident more than once that he was willing to relinquish all the spoils he had gained "for an acquittance of the stiputation [of forty lakhs] which he is bound to pay to the Honourable Company on the dismissal of the brigade.....". However, it is certain not only from the remarks of Middleton but also from the facts that subsequently came to light that his total acquisitions from Ruhelkhand did not suffice to meet all the expenditure he had incurred in its conquest.<sup>27</sup>

#### 14.—The sufferings of the Ruhelas.

Of the contemporary Persian authorities only "Gulistan-i-Rahmat," written by Hafiz's son Mustajab Khan (amplified much later by his grandson under the title of *Gul-i-Rahmat*) gives a fairly detailed account of Shuja's treatment of the families of Hafiz Rahmat and other Ruhela chiefs. The Khan says that all the troops and followers of Hafiz were disarmed, deprived of their horses and ordered to leave Pilibhit. The wazir asked Muhabbat Khan, the eldest surviving son of Hafiz, to point out the spot where his father's treasure lay buried; but he replied that his father had left no treasure. Then the ladies of the family were ordered to hand over all their ornaments and jewels to Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan and were removed to some tents in order to allow the wazir's men to search for the treasure in their apartments in the fort. Troops were posted round the ladies' tents to prevent the inmates from escaping. When the wazir marched to Bisauli Fatehullah Khan and his brothers were imprisoned and their families met the treatment similar to that

<sup>27</sup> Middleton to Hastings, 11th July, 1774, quoted in Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 171-72.

of Hafiz's. All these were sent prisoners to Allahabad where they were kept under close surveillance, suffering greatly not only on the way but also in confinement at Allahabad. Muhab'at Khan was given an allowance of one thousand rupees a month and Hafiz's family was given that of one hundred a month.<sup>28</sup> Other writers give even more meagre accounts. It was Champion who was responsible for formulating charges of oppression and cruelty against the wazir. But these charges are so vague and indefinite and so palpably general in character, and despite Hastings' repeated requests their author so signally failed to substantiate them by quoting specific instances of cruelty and oppression that the letters and despatches containing them are not of much value<sup>29</sup> for us. Champion's report on the subject submitted to the Bengal supreme council long after the war was over is more definite and needs a close examination.

The report is said to have been based on the information supplied by the *harkārās* (news carriers) who were posted by the commander-in-chief with the Ruhela families and was recorded by Macpherson with the explicit purpose of submitting it before the majority of the supreme council. It runs into nine pages in print and was delivered to Champion on 3rd February, 1775. Obviously either it was prepared a few months after the prisoners had been safely lodged in the Allahabad fort or the original manuscript was revised and garbled, for otherwise it would not have been delivered to Champion as late as 3rd February, 1775. According to it the total number of prisoners of the various Ruhela families, including men, women, children and servants, was 700, and the misery and sufferings endured by them were great. Four hundred women, including slaves and maid-servants, belonging to the families of Hafiz and his sons, were stripped of everything except the clothes on their persons, carried in 45

<sup>28</sup> *Gulistan*, 123-25, 128.

<sup>29</sup> Champion to Ben. Sel. Com., May 4, June 12, Sept. 3, 1774 and January 30, 1775; to Hastings, May 10, June 15, 1774; Hastings and Com. to Champion, May 23, 27 and July 1, 1774.

covered *hackiries* and were kept in three tents one of which was large and covered and two small and open, surrounded by old screens (*qanāts*). Hafiz's ten sons and six *chelās* were taken on horses and lodged in one tent. Very insufficient, coarse food and water were supplied, and they were not provided with carpets and had to sleep on the bare ground. The guards behaved insolently, and bad food, insufficient water and discomforts of heat and cold brought on them sufferings of various kinds, and many of the ladies fell ill. The families of other Ruhela chiefs had to undergo similar hardships and miseries. One hundred and fifty women of Mahibullah and Azimullah had to travel in thirty covered *hackiries* and 100 belonging to Fatehullah in twenty closed carriages, and for their board and lodging the same arrangements were made as for Hafiz's people.<sup>30</sup> Macpherson supplied some additional information in his diary (21st May), such as, two cots were provided to the prisoners, one to Hafiz's widow and the other to her sick sons. Describing their condition at Allahabad he says that they were as ill off as before and had still (13th July) to sleep on the ground, without cots.<sup>31</sup>

Between the versions of Macpherson's diary and the above report, which too is prepared by the same person, there are a number of discrepancies and contradictions that deserve special notice. In the diary it is mentioned that Hafiz's sons marched on elephants and his *chelas* (slaves) rode on horses, while in the report the sons are seated on horses and the *chelās* made to walk on foot.<sup>32</sup> In the entry dated 2nd May, the third day of march from Pilibhit, it is recorded that the wazir's wife (Bahu Begum) presented a palanquin<sup>33</sup> to Hafiz's widow to ride in ; but there is no such mention in the report which produces the impression that she must have been compelled to travel in a crowded *hackirie* at least till 27th

<sup>30</sup> The report is given in *Soldiering in India*, pp. 216-225.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p. 224.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 207, 216-217.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 207.

May when a *doolie* was sent to her by Ibadullah Khan of Shahjahanpur.<sup>34</sup> The diary has it that on 24th of May all the knives, scissors and betel-nut crackers were taken away from Hafiz's widow and other women of the family and the school-master who used to attend the children was "ordered not to come near them any more,"<sup>35</sup> while it is emphasised throughout the report that all the prisoners, including women and children, were allowed to have nothing with them except the clothes they had on at the time of their arrest and that they reached Allahabad in the same dress. From Macpherson's own account one can guess that at least servants of the prisoners were allowed restricted liberty of movement, for he mentions in the report that on 22nd May Nur Muhammad, Hafiz's *chela*, "brought a message from the sons" to the English camp and on 27th May Mahibullah and Fatehullah sent their spiritual preceptor to Champion. This message, quoted with approval in the report, contains absurdities one of which is that "There is only one jar of water which affords them [456 prisoners of Hafiz's family] a very scanty proportion.....".<sup>36</sup> "This is contradicted by the report itself (*vide* entry of 21st May) which reads that "when any of the women wants to drink an old woman brings a *beasty* [water-carrier's] bag to which they generally put their mouths<sup>37</sup>....." This remark clearly shows that at least one woman water-carrier was attached to the women prisoners of Hafiz's family. Several other discrepancies can be pointed out, but space forbids their multiplication.

Champion's report gives rise to the suspicion that it is not a faithful picture of the sufferings of the Ruhela prisoners not only because of its contradictions and its being in conflict with Macpherson's diary in several particulars, but also because it is strongly controverted by the English Resident

<sup>34</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 220.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 219-220.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 219-220.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 218 ; also C. P. C., IV. 1044 which says that a water-carrier was posted.



Middleton who was all along present during the Ruhelkhand campaign and by the evidence of Leslie and Hannay who served under Champion, before the supreme council<sup>38</sup> in January, 1775. Hastings himself had suspicion about the truth of the charges and Shuja positively denied them and informed the governor that Hafiz's family was "well-supplied with provisions and 3,000 rupees per month is appointed for this purpose." The wazir maintained that his conduct had been grossly misrepresented and he expressed his desire to meet the charges, if they were revealed.<sup>39</sup> Champion's evidence before the supreme council at Calcutta and years after his cross-examination by the House of Commons weakened rather than strengthened his case. In fact the whole evidence in our possession tends beyond doubt to the conclusion that Champion's charge-sheet was highly exaggerated and contained misstatements and half-truths. It was only natural for the prisoners to magnify their hardships and appeal to Champion for their release, as they were aware that the wazir could not afford to displease the English commander-in-chief who was not friendly to Shuja and was therefore encouraging them to place their grievances before him.

It does not, however, follow that the Ruhela prisoners were well-treated and that they suffered no privation, hardship and misery. They were not treated according to their rank in life in respect of food and drink, dress and accommodation, conveyance and menial service, and were deprived of all their wealth and ornaments. It can be easily imagined that the guards must have been insolent and that a variety of humiliation must have been their lot. Middleton's observations seem to be just and true, when he wrote that "They certainly have been improperly neglected and have suffered

<sup>38</sup> Middleton to Hastings, June 17 and July 5, 1774; and the evidence of Leslie and Hannay, *vide* Strachey's *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 208-220.

<sup>39</sup> Middleton's letter referred to above; Shuja to Hastings, *vide* C. P. C., IV. 1179.

much distress and inconvenience for want of proper accommodation in camp, but my own knowledge does not furnish me with any instance of cruelty or violence wantonly exercised upon them."<sup>40</sup> And for these sufferings Shuja-ud-daulah must be held responsible and not Hastings who remonstrated against such a policy and strongly urged upon the wazir to rectify the wrong. It must, however, be added in fairness to the wazir that it was natural for him to have been prejudiced against his prisoners who from the very beginning made an attempt to seek the intercession of Champion and even of lesser English officers and some of them like Muhibullah Khan and other sons of Dunde Khan abused the liberty given to them by trying to secrete their wealth <sup>41</sup>

The charge of the extermination of the Ruhelas as a people is preposterous and does not need refutation. A number of villages in Hafiz's territory were plundered and burnt by the wazir's cavalry before the battle of Miran Katra; but the sufferers were, as is clear from Macpherson's diary, mostly Hindus.<sup>42</sup> On the field of battle 2,000 Ruhelas had fallen (according to Macpherson 5,000 in all in the field and on the roads due to pursuit by the wazir's cavalry etc.), and on the conclusion of the campaign 20,000 were banished across the Ganges, while 7,000, including women, and children, were carried prisoners to Allahabad. There is nothing on record to show that there was any further loss of life, any further imprisonment or expulsion from Ruhelkhand either during or after the war. After a careful consideration of all the available evidence the present writer finds himself in agreement with the conclusions of Strachey and Davies that the charge is baseless.

<sup>40</sup> Middleton to Hastings, June 17, 1774.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 189-190.

## 15.—Why was Champion against Shuja ?

It may be asked as to what motive Champion had in grossly exaggerating the so-called cruelties inflicted on the Ruhela people. Hastings believed that his charges were inspired by his ill-feeling towards the wazir and dissatisfaction with the Bengal authorities, as he had not been promoted to the rank of brigadier-general to which he considered himself entitled and his powers were strictly confined to the military conduct of the expedition, while the wazir was allowed to retain all other matters relating to war, negotiations, peace, etc., in his hands and the recently appointed resident at his court (Middleton) was entrusted with the conduct of political affairs and the management of the relations between Shuja and the company. Champion had set out on the campaign "in a disgruntled frame of mind", and it was galling to his sense of racial pride that the control of war should be concentrated in the hands of the wazir who should turn for advice to Middleton and not to the commander-in-chief. It became, therefore, his deep-rooted desire to prove the unworkability of the above arrangement and that was why as early as 24th April he had charged the wazir with cowardice and with hindering the successful prosecution of the war, concluding his accusation with the significant remark, "I have been thus particular with regard to the Vizier's conduct that it may be better known *how to deal with him in future*." Champion could not long conceal his motive and within seventeen days of his making the first accusation against the wazir he requested Hastings' permission to return to Calcutta, for "the authority given to the Vizier", he wrote, "over your army has totally absorbed the degree of consequence due to my station."<sup>43</sup> In this and a few other letters subsequently written he drew a pitiful

<sup>43</sup> Hastings to Middleton, May 22, 1774 ; Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 156-59.

<sup>44</sup> Champion to Hastings, May 10, 1774, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., Vol. XXIV. p. 348.

picture of the sufferings of the Ruhela families and pleaded for enhanced powers for himself so that he might be in a position to protect the orphans and the widows from wanton cruelty and oppression. Another powerful motive that inspired the above charges was Champion's desire to share the plunder and spoils of Ruhelkhand with the wazir and both these feelings working simultaneously found their expression in his behaviour towards Shuja, poisoned his relations with him and led to almost daily occurrences of an unpleasant nature. Some of these occurrences, showing strained relations between these two personages beginning with the plunder of Shuja's men by some troops belonging to the second brigade and Champion's failure to trace and punish the offenders, have already been given in the previous pages, and others may be read in the pages of Macpherson's diary and in the private letters of Middleton to Hastings. "Every day produces the warmest remonstrances from the Nabob", wrote Middleton, "on subjects which but for the unhappy misunderstanding which has occurred, could never have claimed a moment's reflection."<sup>45</sup> Such incidents and their original cause, namely, Champion's claim to a share in the plunder which he asserted in several of his letters to Hastings alarmed the governor and the wazir, and while Hastings refused to agree to permit the English troops any share in the spoils, Shuja, not being in a position to earn the open hostility of Champion in the midst of the campaign, tried to appease him by promising him three lakhs of rupees, besides seven lakhs to the English troops and 50,000 to their officers. But even after having been tipped so handsomely, Champion continued sending exaggerated reports about the value of the treasure the wazir had acquired and the magnitude of the sufferings he was inflicting upon the Ruhela captives. Obviously he was not satisfied with the donation from the

<sup>45</sup> Middleton to Hastings, *vide* Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, p. 161. For charges and counter-charges between Shuja and Champion see C. P. C., IV. 1036, 1062, 1111, 1114, 1122, 1126, 1142, 1177, 1179, 1442.

wazir, probably because it did not come up to his expectations and also because he was not permitted to accept it till twelve years later.

### 16.—Death of Shuja-ud-daulah, 26th January, 1775.

Shuja-ud-daulah, who had not been keeping good health since about the middle of March 1774, was taken ill a few days after his victory over Hafiz Rahmat, and owing to exertion caused by constant journeying through Ruhelkhand to Laldang and back to Faizabad, and toil of campaigning in the inclement weather (summer and the rainy season) the complaint continued increasing till he became prostrate and incapacitated. Yet his presence was so absolutely necessary for restoring order, settling the conquered country and reducing Faizullah to submission that he could not leave for Oudh till the end of October. At Lucknow his condition was considered serious and he had to hasten for Faizabad where he arrived on 15th December. Being too weak to ride a horse or an elephant, he entered his capital in a palanquin covered with glass (*abrak*) shutters and was given a cordial public reception. Shops were decorated and many bankers, jewellers and other well-to-do merchants, mostly Hindus, strewed silver coins and flowers made of silver in his way. But the pleasure and joy of the public on his victorious return was marred by his illness from which he had been suffering for nearly nine lunar months. Although he must have all-through been under medical treatment, regular and anxious attention was paid only now. Thirty Indian physicians, the most notable among whom was Mualij Khan, were employed on one lakh of rupees per month; but their best efforts proved of no avail and the wazir's wound, which was the cause of his illness, continued rapidly degenerating. A French surgeon named Visage was next tried and this man applied liniment of mercury which produced an entirely adverse effect, throwing the wazir into a salivation and causing so much swelling of his mouth that



it became impossible for him to eat anything.<sup>46</sup> A further complication was caused by the appearance of dysentery and the consequent physical weakness which brought him to the verge of collapse. Visage's treatment was therefore abandoned at the request of Salar Jang and of the ladies of the *harem* for that of the Indian physicians and surgeons (*jarrāhān*), but to no purpose. Finally at the wazir's own desire Campbell, Surgeon-Major of the English brigade and Captain Stuart began to attend him. They dressed his wound and administered to him opiate for several days which gave him sleep and partial and temporary relief from pain and dysentery. But the original complaint continued to aggravate, and the ladies getting alarmed from their painful experience of Visage's experiment would not permit him from 23rd January onward to take any medicine for internal application from a foreigner. Two days after a preparation of rhubarb (*rewand*) was prescribed to stimulate bowels, which led to the recurrence of dysentery. He began to sink from the 24th and obviously his dissolution was at hand. An attempt was made to invoke the intercession of the gods, and a large number of Muslim divines and Hindu priests was employed to offer prayers for his recovery. Large sums of money were given in charity to Sayyids and dervishes and beggars of various denominations. But all these proved to be of no avail. During the last twenty four hours of his life Shuja-ud-daulah remained almost unconscious, unable to take anything and powerless to speak. He died at about six in the morning<sup>47</sup> of 26th January, 1775.

#### 17.—The various versions of his death examined.

Two different versions are on record regarding the origin of the complaint that hastened the end of Shuja-ud-daulah in the prime of his life. The first story is that after the

<sup>46</sup> *Harcharan*, 515a. He is supported by Galliez, *vide* his letter to Governor and Council of Bengal, Dec. 31, 1774. Gentil, however, wrongly accuses Indian physicians of this blunder. See *Gentil*, p. 228.

<sup>47</sup> *Harcharan*, 514b-515a; *G. Ali*, III. 64; *M. L.*, 161; *Siyar*, III. 939 and 940; *Imad*, 118-119; *Maadan*, IV. 257a and b; *Mirat*, 267a;

occupation of Pilibhit the wazir had Hafiz's daughter brought to him one night to satisfy his lust and as he uncovered himself the proud and brave girl gave the blow of a dagger, dipped into poison and concealed under her garments, in his thigh for the double purpose of saving herself from molestation and avenging her father.<sup>48</sup> This very wound is said to have degenerated so much as to have become the cause of the wazir's death. The other version says that about the middle of March 1774, a little more than a month before the battle of Miranpur Katra, a very small syphilitic tumour had appeared on one of the wazir's thighs, which owing to the exertion of the campaign and want of proper care and treatment gradually degenerated into a cancer to which eventually he succumbed after ten months' suffering.<sup>49</sup> The first story stands discredited not only because it is apocryphal and is denied by most of the well-informed and impartial contemporary authorities, but also because the three different versions into which it resolves itself differ so materially as to contradict one another and throw doubt on its authenticity. According to one version of this story the scene of the outrage was Pilibhit and the victim of Shuja's lust was Hafiz's daughter<sup>50</sup>; according to the second, the place was Bisauli and the victim the daughter of Muhibullah Khan,<sup>51</sup> while the third is silent about the place, but mentions

*Mutakherin*, 215b; *Kalyan*, 187a; *T. M.*, 266a; *Gentil*, 228; Gailliez to G. G. and Council, Dec. 31, 1774, January 16, 23, 26, 1775; Middleton to Hastings, Dec. 21, 1774; Polier to G. G. and Council, January 24, 26, 1775; *C. P. C.*, IV. 1253, 1496, 1532, 1552 and 1558.

<sup>48</sup> The only contemporary Persian authorities who seemed to have believed it are two, *D. C.*, 290; *M. L.*, 161. But even they say that news reached the emperor that it had happened.

<sup>49</sup> *Harcharan*, 514b; *Siyar*, III. 939; *G. Ali*, III. 64; *T. M.*, 226; *Gulistan*, 127 and 28; *Abdul Karim*, 316; *Mirat*, 267a; *Imad*, 119; *Maadan*, IV. 257a; *Mutakherin*, 215b; *Kalyan*, 187a.

<sup>50</sup> *Siyar*, III. 939 (The author says there was a strong rumour to that effect yet it was wrong); Mustafa, the translator believed the above version—see *Siyar*, Eng. Tr. Vol. IV. 60-61 n.

<sup>51</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 222.

the victim as the daughter of Dunde Khan.<sup>52</sup> If the first version of this story may be believed the date of the happening must be either 28th or 29th of April when the wazir's wound was already more than a month old, for Harcharan Das who was present at Faizabad at the time of Shuja's return from Ruhelkhand mentions in clear words that his wound was *then nine months' old (zakhm-i-mazkur ki az muddat nuh mah bud)*,<sup>53</sup> while according to the second version the date was 29th of May,<sup>54</sup> when the wazir was altogether incapacitated for committing such an outrage owing to the advanced state of his illness,<sup>55</sup> whereas the third version makes it happen four months before his death,<sup>56</sup> that is, sometime about 26th of September 1774, which is on the very face of it absurd. It was further maintained by the protagonists of the story that the girl was stabbed to death by the wazir's orders, according to Thomas Deane Pearse just before his death and according to the French renegade Mustafa (Raymond) immediately after she had wounded Shuja, while in the English camp at Bisauli the rumour was circulated (29th May) that she had committed suicide "to testify her own innocence and redeem the honour of her family." Middleton, who was then present with the wazir and who possessed unique opportunities of knowing the facts, investigated into the allegations as he heard the story and he found it a malicious fabrication by an important personage in the English camp, outside the reach of the wazir's just wrath, and the supposed victim of his lust alive and hale and hearty. He informed Hastings that the wazir's physical condition was then (29th of May) such, of course owing to the wound in the thigh, as to incapacitate him for any sexual indulgence.<sup>57</sup> It may be

<sup>52</sup> Col. Thomas Deane Pearse to General Pattison, Feb. 23, 1775, *vide British Indian Military Repository*, Vol. I. 29-30.

<sup>53</sup> *Harcharan*, 514b.

<sup>54</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 222.

<sup>55</sup> Middleton to Hastings, June 17, 1774.

<sup>56</sup> Pearse's letter of 23rd February 1775 referred to above.

<sup>57</sup> Middleton to Hastings, June 17, 1774, quoted in Strachey, *Hastings and the Rohilla War*, 208-210.

argued that these versions of the story refer to two different events, namely, the outrage committed on Hafiz's daughter and another on Muhibullah's daughter, and that if the latter was found by Middleton to be devoid of any foundation, it did not follow that the former too was untrue. Obviously such a contention cannot be true, for none of the authorities, contemporary or of a later date, not even Macpherson who kept a regular diary of events and rumours, refers to two incidents, and every writer who has mentioned one story has betrayed a complete ignorance of the other, showing thereby that all of them were narrating different versions of one and the same tale. The version that makes Hafiz's daughter as the tragic heroine is less plausible than the one proved by Middleton to be a malicious fabrication. It is described by the author of the *Siyar* as a mere rumour which neither he nor any other contemporary authority considered it his worthwhile to examine and which he rejected as *absolutely false*.<sup>58</sup> It is worthy of note that it was not mentioned by Champion, who was anxious to seize every opportunity of blackening the wazir's character, in any of his letters and despatches, nor even by his A.D.C. whose diary abounds in unbecoming remarks and reflections on Shuja, no less than in rumours and bazar gossip. Had there spread any such rumour either at Pilibhit or on the way from the latter town to Bisauli, Macpherson at least who recorded the equally baseless rumour of the outrage committed on Muhibullah's daughter must not have missed to give it a place in his journal. And we have it on the testimony of Mustafa (Raymond), the translator of the *Siyar*, that the English surgeon who treated the wazir and dressed his wound "affirmed it to be a buboe"<sup>59</sup> [tumour] and not a wound caused by a dagger. The irresistible

<sup>58</sup> *Siyar* writes as follows :—

با آنکه این سخن مطلقاً اصله مذاشت و متعص غلط بود اما بمرتبه  
شهرت یافت که اے آلاى بعض کسان همین میدادند و علت مردنش  
می شناسند -

*Siyar*, III. p. 939.

<sup>59</sup> Eng. Tr. of the *Siyar*, Vol. IV. pp. 60-61. n.

conclusion is that Middleton's finding was beyond doubt correct and that the story had its origin in the English camp at Bisauli where it was deliberately concocted by an important officer with the definite object of injuring Shuja-ud-daulah's reputation, and though in the course of transmission from person to person and place to place it departed from the original in some important details, its framework remained the same. The story gained credence in some circles, because it was known that the wazir was suffering from a wound and had died of it. Some individual Englishmen were primarily responsible for its wide circulation, but it was the French renegade Raymond (Mustafa), the translator of the *Siyar*, who, accustomed to the love of romance in his own life as well as thought and expression, preferred the tale of an unknown gossip woman supposed to have been in the wazir's harem to the sober testimony of the English surgeon and the author of the book he was translating, and transmitted it in a highly coloured and romantic garb, which would have amused even Macpherson and Pearse, to posterity.<sup>60</sup>

#### 18.—His burial ; universal grief at his death.

Shuja-ud-daulah's death cast a gloom over the cities of Faizabad and Ayodhia and he was mourned throughout Oudh and Allahabad. The people had spent three days in dreadful silence and when the news spread in the morning of 26th January nothing was heard except wailing and crying from all sides. "Great and small," writes Gentil who was an eye-witness of the scene, "all appeared to have lost their father. Every one thought that ruin had come to him ; the merchants, the workmen of all kinds quitted their shops ; their women and their children ran lamenting through the streets, asking one another, 'where shall we find a prince like him, a veritable father ? We have lost all.' 'Shuja-ud-

<sup>60</sup> In order to make the story as romantic as he could Mustafa translated the word *جهالت* ascribed by the author of the *Siyar* to Afghan girls in general and Hafiz's daughter in particular, as 'ferocity', though it really means ignorance or rusticity.' See *Siyar*, Eng. Tr. Vol. IV. p. 60.



Daulah is dead,' they cried. And at the same time they struck their breasts, dishevelled their hair, and rent their garments. Sorrow and despair were at their height in the seraglio. One would say that everything was in fire and blood, and all the night the same desolation continued. The day that followed was yet worse, and the mourning and despair redoubled, at the moment when the body was carried to the grave."<sup>61</sup> Harcharan Das, another eye-witness, writes in the same strain and he is supported by Ghulam Hussain Khan, the author of the *Siyar*, who assures us that even Muhabbat Khan, son of Hafiz, and the wazir's captive and enemy, shed a flood of tears on the occasion.<sup>62</sup> Major Anthony Polier, then at Faizabad, was struck by the universal grief that he witnessed and wrote to Hastings, "It is difficult to find words to express the sorrow and grief of almost all his attendants and in general of every inhabitant of this place at this event....."<sup>63</sup> The sight was even more touching when the dead body was taken to the *Sarju* for a wash, according to Shia rites, and then placed on a bier and carried in state procession, followed by the deceased's sons, relations and officers, Gailliez, Polier and other Europeans at Faizabad and thousands of wailing men and women to Gulab-bari, where it was buried after due ceremonies. Many of the faithful servants of the deceased nawab, such as Hasan Raza Khan, head of his household department, Habib Beg, Umrao Giri Gosain, Nishat Ali Khan, Bahar Ali Khan, Jawahar Ali Khan and several others, discarding their costly robes for those of dervishes, took up their abode round his grave. But they were one by one recalled by Asaf-ud-daulah who succeeded his father as nawab.<sup>64</sup>

The claim of Asaf-ud-daulah, the wazir's eldest son, to

<sup>61</sup> *Gentil*, 289.

<sup>62</sup> *Siyar*, III. 940.

<sup>63</sup> Polier to Hastings, 26th January, 1775, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., Feb. 6, 1775.

<sup>64</sup> *Harcharan*, 516b; *Gentil*, 289; *Siyar*, III. 940-941; *Maadan*, IV. 257b and 258a; *Imad*, 119.

succession was universally recognised and Shuja's death was not followed by any disturbance whatever, and utmost tranquillity prevailed in the capital and the provinces.<sup>65</sup> The dying wazir had dictated a letter in one of his intervals of consciousness, to Hastings, recommending Asaf-ud-daulah to his friendship and assistance, promising that the latter "will pay the same attention and regard to your friendship as I have always done and will in the same manner always act conformably to your advice and ever remain in alliance with you." "If your conduct on this occasion is upright," he added, "it will redound to your eternal honour and will be transmitted to posterity that the English chiefs acted in this upright manner in consideration of their friendship."<sup>66</sup> How Hastings would have treated his ally's last wishes had he possessed the power of government in his hands is not possible to guess accurately. It is, however, notorious that the supreme council paid scant attention to them and definitely closed the chapter of that theoretical equality which had hitherto existed between the nawab-wazir of Oudh and the English in Bengal.

<sup>65</sup> Gailliez to Ben. Council, January 28, 1775.

<sup>66</sup> Tr. of Shuja's letter, sent by Polier and received at Calcutta on 6th Feb. 1775, *vide* Ben. Sec. Cons., February 6, 1775.

## CHAPTER XX

### CHARACTER

#### 1.—Shuja's character a subject of controversy.

No character in modern Indian history has been the subject of so much popular controversy and misrepresentation as that of Shuja-ud-daulah. Nor has any elicited such diametrically opposite judgments from sober writers, contemporary and modern. The reason seems to be that his indomitable personality, dominating the stage of North-Indian politics for over two decades, excited jealousy and ill-feelings of his Indian and English rivals and opponents who pursued his memory even after his death with unforgiving vindictiveness. With no access to the material other than the denunciations and exaggerations of this class of men, most English writers of the 18th century fell into the error of partisanship, and historians of our generation have not yet been able to get over the difficulty of balancing the opposite views by a dispassionate examination of all the available evidence. Shuja-ud-daulah's personality, and his virtues and faults, are apparent on the face of the narrative as given in this and the previous volume, and it is proposed to give here only a brief résumé of the same, with an emphasis on those aspects of his character that need further clarification.

#### 2.—His features described.

All contemporary authorities agree in representing Shuja-ud-daulah, since his attainment of maturity till a month or two before his death, as a tall, well-built, stout and extremely good-looking man of white complexion, with long arms, broad chest, a prominent nose and open forehead. From his several extant portraits it is clear that his face was clean shaven except for a long moustache which was allowed

to grow and kept twisted after the semi-Hindu fashion and, unlike the usual Muslim practice, left untrimmed in the middle. His eyes, though not very large, were bright and penetrating and gave an indication of fire and vigour within. His person was so well-formed and the limbs of his body so symmetrical that all kinds of clothes seemed to suit and embellish him.<sup>1</sup> Jean Law, a famous French general who saw him in his early manhood (1758-1761) was struck by his splendid appearance and described him as "the most handsome person I have seen in India."<sup>2</sup> Alexander Dow, a prejudiced Englishman, thus spoke of him in 1768: "Suja-ul-Dowla is extremely handsome in his person, about five feet, eleven inches in height, and so nervous and strong that, with one stroke of the sabre, he could cut off the head of a buffalo. He is active, passionate and ambitious; his penetrating eyes seem, at first sight, to promise uncommon acuteness and fire of mind....."<sup>3</sup> Another Frenchman with gifts of observation and judgment, who saw him towards the end of his life, had to ditto other observers and write that he possessed "plenty of spirit." "His strength and skill in all physical exercises," he added, "had something of the romantic."<sup>4</sup>

### 3.—His virtues and faults.

With an imposing person Shuja combined the natural gifts of sweet disposition, stentorian voice and ready speech, the highly cultivated virtues of urbanity of taste and manners, and above all a dignified mien and carriage. "Like all men of rank in Asia," observes George Forster, "he was courteous and affable, had an insinuating address and accomplished manners."<sup>5</sup> His polish and personal magnetism as well as eloquence gave him powerful advantages in his dealings with men and affairs, and officers, foreign agents and suitors for

<sup>1</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 285b.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoire sur L' Empire Mogol*, ed. by Martineau, (1918), p. 181.

<sup>3</sup> *History of Hindostan*, Appendix to Vol. II. p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> *Modave's Journal du Voyage*, Paris MS. p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> *A Journey, etc.*, Vol. I. p. 184.

justice who waited on him seldom went away disappointed. We have it on the authority of a well-informed chronicler of his son's court, who is substantially supported by the English traveller quoted above, that whoever entered Shuja-ud-daulah's closet came back happier, thinking that the nawab was more friendly towards him than towards anybody else.<sup>6</sup> He was full of energy, activity and enterprise. But these gifts were somewhat marred by boundless ambition, impetuosity, and love of ostentation, and by occasional fits of vanity which were born out of consciousness of his high station in life. It should, however, be added in fairness to him, that vanity and temper were displayed in his dealings with persons of an equal or superior rank or pretensions and that these saved him from humiliation at the hands of some of the equally vain and arrogant agents of the English company<sup>7</sup>—humiliation that had been the fate of Mir Jafar, Mir Qasim and even of Shah Alam. The Fort William authorities, aware of his pride, often advised<sup>8</sup> their representatives to show proper deference to the wazir who was jealous of his dignity and reputation. English observers from Alexander Dow to Verelst<sup>9</sup> were of opinion that he suffered from impatience, inconstancy and volatility, which induced him to abandon schemes and projects which were constantly formed in his mind by ambition and enterprise. Superficially seen this might seem to be a valid charge; but a close examination reveals that he never really abandoned any important scheme, however early it might have been formed

<sup>6</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 285b.

<sup>7</sup> English governors, commanders, etc., talked contemptuously of Indian rulers, in their own circle. Even Hastings wrote to Barwell on 22nd July 1772: "I always thought *the man* [Shuja] *and his connection of too little importance.....*" (*vide Gleig*, Vol. I. p. 3151). He poured scorn over Shah Alam, calling him 'King of shreds and patches'. Smith, Barker and others used similar unbecoming words about Shuja—see Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Feb. 23, 1768. Champion was most guilty in this respect.

<sup>8</sup> *Vide Soldiering in India*; Bengal Government's instructions to Deputation to Shuja in 1768.

<sup>9</sup> Dow's *History of Hindostan*, Vol. II. Appendix, p. 92; Verelst's letter of March 28, 1768, *vide his View of the English Government in Bengal*, p. 103; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 6, 1768.



in his mind. What he did was to discard his means one after another till he succeeded in achieving his object. It was probably this constant change of diplomatic devices, intended as much to keep others off his scent<sup>10</sup> as to discover the means most suited for a particular emergency, that was mistaken for volatility. His policy, correspondence and net achievements are a clear proof of the fact that he never really lost sight of material projects most of which, like his appointment as wazir, displacement of Munir-ud-daulah, reduction of Hindupati, conquest of Ruhelkhand, military and fiscal reforms, etc. were realised after several years' constant exertion and in the teeth of great obstacles a long time after they were first conceived of. This shows that he was not devoid of constancy, patience and steadiness.

#### 4.—His education, taste and hobbies.

Shuja-ud-daulah had received liberal education of a high order. Besides mastering Persian language and literature, he had acquired good knowledge of Turki and Arabic and some acquaintance with Marathi and Hindi also. He must have been proficient in Urdu which had become the mother tongue of Indian Musalmans during the first half of the 18th century. At any rate he took delight in Urdu poetry and was a patron of Urdu poets. He also seems to have picked up rudiments of spoken English during ten years of his close contact with the company's representatives from Bengal. He wrote a good hand and his style in Persian was clear, forceful and elegant, and he had scholars, poets and calligraphists at his court. His proficiency in Mathematics<sup>11</sup> had given him an insight into the intricacies of financial administration and saved him from absolute dependence on the skill of his secretaries and accountants. He had a special taste for music and we are

<sup>10</sup> See chapters XIII and XIV, and also the author's paper on "Was the Abdali Invasion of 1766-67 a Real Menace to Bengal", *vide Calcutta Review*, July, 1940.

<sup>11</sup> *Harcharan*, 518b.

told by a contemporary writer that he was personally a skilled musician. He was likewise greatly interested in architecture and painting, and there were good architects and painters in his service, some of them being Europeans lent to him by the government of Calcutta.<sup>12</sup>

Though not devout, Shuja was a believing Shia Muslim, but no fanatic and not even punctilious in the observance of the prescribed daily five prayers and the fast of Ramzan, as is clear from the daily routine of his life and the succinct but significant statement of the chronicler of his son's court that he [Shuja] *never abandoned the prayers and fasts that were necessary*.<sup>13</sup> He was, however, careful in celebrating with due mourning rites the anniversary of the martyrdom at Karbala of Husain, a grandson of Prophet Muhammad, which is one of the most important religious festivals of the Shias. There was hardly any form of medieval Indian amusement which did not attract him ; but it were hunting, hawking, animal combats, music and dance, kite and pigeon flying that particularly interested him and there were many thousands of pigeons in his menageries. Similarly he indulged in almost every species of pleasure except perhaps the drinking of wine.<sup>14</sup> The greatest blot on his character, however, was his excessive fondness for the company of women and his addiction to sexual hobbies which absorbed much of his time, interfered sometimes with the business of administration and neutralised his great qualities of head and heart. In this respect he fell below the standard of the age, for though 18th century Indian and European<sup>15</sup> princes alike were guilty of immorality

<sup>12</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 263b-270b, gives a list of scholars, poets, musicians, etc. Anthony Polier, a Swiss engineer and architect, was in his service. See C.P.C., III. 973, Vol. IV. 293, 1022.

<sup>13</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 258b.

<sup>14</sup> I have not come across any contemporary authority maintaining that he used to drink. What Shakir Khan (*vide Tazkira Shakir Khani*, p. 88) says probably means that he was intoxicated with the pride of valour and wealth, etc.

<sup>15</sup> Compare the character of Louis XV of France who was Shuja's contemporary.

none was a greater voluptuary than Shuja-ud-daulah. Notwithstanding his endeavour to correct himself after the battle of Buxar and with considerable success, unbridled prostitution and venery remained with him as the besetting sin of his life. His *harem* was filled with more than two thousand and seven hundred women of whom 2000 were maid-servants and seven hundred and odd his wives,—one, namely, Bahu Begum, being the principal *begam* and the remaining only co-wives, entitled *khurd mahals* (secondary wives).<sup>16</sup> From these women he had more than four dozen children, 32 sons according to one authority (28 according to another) and 18 or 19 daughters.

As has been said Shuja-ud-daulah was devoted to all sorts of manly sports. He could ride and even tame a most unruly horse or elephant, and he took delight in attacking wild animals of the jungle with an arrow, spear or matchlock and sometimes with the sword. The game of chase was one of his absorbing hobbies, and it afforded him welcome excitement and adventure practically every day for seven months (November to May) in the year when he undertook an annual tour of his provinces, combining business with pleasure. The French captain Gentil, who accompanied him, says that "every day of the march was a hunt" and gives a graphic description of some of the interesting excursions which it is not possible to reproduce here for want of space. The nawab was a magnificent shot and bagged numerous tigers and other ferocious animals of the forest, besides a large variety of fowl. In one of these expeditions he saved the life of the English captain, Gabriel Harper, who was about to be attacked and torn to pieces by a ferocious tiger, when Shuja fired his musket with such effect that the beast dropped down dead on

<sup>16</sup> *Harcharan*, 518a. According to *Forster* (*vide* vol. I. p. 185) his wives numbered 800, while according to Modave (see *Journal du Voyage* p. 39) all his women were 5,000. For his children see *Harcharan*, 518a *Kalyan*, 187a and b. *Forster's* number is 50, Modave's 57 and an anonymous report on his family preserved in India Office Library has 49. See *W. Hastings and Oudh* by C. Davies, 68.

the ground "at the same moment as it rushed on the English captain."<sup>17</sup> He was a mighty wrestler and so daring and expert in swimming that he could swim across the *Ghaghra* alone from one bank to the other during rainy season when the river was in flood.<sup>18</sup> He possessed considerable skill in the use of arms and was expert in wielding the bow and matchlock, the sword and spear. Harcharan Das relates an anecdote that armed with spear he once went to the Maratha army, disguised as a Qizilbash Mughal cavalryman, on the pretext of applying for employment. On being questioned as to the weapon in the use of which he might be most proficient he named spear and in the contest that followed as a trial between him on one side and four skilled Maratha spearsmen on the other he beat them all and returned to his camp covered with glory.<sup>19</sup> Champion himself testified to his proficiency as a skilled soldier before he had come into clash with the wazir. "His Excellency," he writes in his diary on 20th February, 1773, "breakfasted with me, after which he entertained me with the dexterity of the Mogulls, riding full speed, discharging their matchlocks at a spear with a little bit of cloth fixed thereat, and throwing their lances, which they are very expert at. He and his sons performed with great strength and agility."<sup>20</sup>

### 5.—Was Shuja not a brave soldier ?

So far our authorities have been practically unanimous; at any rate none has sought to deny Shuja any of the physical virtues described in the foregoing pages. Towards the end of his life, however, opinion was expressed by Champion that he lacked that physical courage which is necessary for a soldier in the hour of crisis, and this opinion was so agreeable to most of his English contemporaries in Bengal that it soon became the accepted view among them, and was even transmitted to the posterity almost as an uncontroverted historical

<sup>17</sup> *Gentil*, p. 268. For an account of Shuja's hunts see pp. 265-271.

<sup>18</sup> *Harcharan*, 518b.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Soldiering in India*, p. 113.

fact. George Forster, an English traveller of uncommon gifts of observation, who was fully aware of Shuja-ud-daulah's fondness for violent physical exercises, love of adventure and proficiency in the use of arms, particularly sketched that aspect of his character. ".....He [Shuja] himself," observed he, "was not endowed with the genius of a soldier. He wanted that valour, or courage, which is ever shown in the event of common danger, and at every season which requires its exertion ; but when personal strength, or skill, was to decide the combat, Shuja-ud-Dowlah had few equals. He rode, without fear, the most unruly horses ; he would attack with the sword, matchlock, or the bow, in the use of which he was wonderfully expert, the most ferocious animals of the field. This species of courage he seems to have acquired from his skill in the use of arms, and in the strength and activity of his body. In situations of indiscriminate danger, as in the day of battle, he is said to have been deficient in the ordinary exertions of fortitude. Though Shuja-ud-Dowlah was the ostensible conductor of the Rohilla war, he evinced throughout the campaign a marked pusillanimity ; and in the engagement ...sheltering himself in the rear, is accused of betraying evident signs of fear, which were not wholly effaced until he saw the severed head of the Rohilla chief." <sup>21</sup>

Whatever may be the verdict of medical science, common sense cannot deny physical courage to one who could readily risk his life in riding a most unruly horse or elephant, in hunting a ferocious tiger with the sword or lance and in swimming across a river more mighty than the Ganges during the rainy season and infested with dangerous reptiles. Nor does it stand to reason that the species of courage possessed by a soldier is essentially different from that of a mighty hunter of tigers, of a reckless rider of incorrigible animals or of one devoted to all sorts of violent physical exercises which involve grave danger for life. And it should be remembered that Shuja combined all these qualifications in an abundant

<sup>21</sup> *A Journey, etc.*, vol. I. p. 183.



degree. Apart from the above considerations Forster's theory falls to the ground when critically examined in the light of the contemporary evidence from various sources. In the first place, no contemporary non-English writer (though there was a goodly number of French and Indian chroniclers) ever held any such views. In the second place, all those English writers who, like Forster, charged Shuja with cowardice expressed this opinion after Champion's indictment of 24th April, 1774, and borrowed directly or indirectly from him or his A.D.C Macpherson both of whom were openly hostile to Shuja. Thirdly, Indian and French historians who knew the wazir intimately record in unambiguous terms that he was not only proficient in the use of arms but was also a *brave and daring*<sup>22</sup> soldier. Fourthly, those Englishmen of affairs who were acquainted with Shuja and wrote anything about him before Champion's despatch referred to, positively ascribed to him personal courage and bravery. Alexander Dow, for instance, who was highly prejudiced against the wazir for his refusal to farm out to him saltpetre in one of his districts, and who painted him as black as he could in a denunciatory sketch of his character, written in 1768, testified to his courage and bravery. "Together with being heir to the fruits of his father's crime," remarked Dow maliciously, "he (Shuja) inherits all his latent baseness of mind, for if *we except personal courage*, he possesses not one virtue more than Seifdar Jung."<sup>23</sup> Fifthly, even some of those English writers, writing subsequent to Champion's despatch, who were possessed of greater critical acumen and impartiality, recognised in Shuja that daring and coolness in times of trials and dangers which go to make a courageous soldier. William Francklin, author of the *History of the Reign of Shah Aulum*, and

<sup>22</sup> *Siyar*, III. 895 says that he possessed bravery and valour: *Hurcharan*, 518a; *Maadan*, IV. 258b used the word *diler* (brave and courageous) to express his character.

Modave's *Journal du Voyage*, p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Dow's *History of Hindostan*, Appendix to Vol. II. p. 92.

an exact contemporary of Shuja wrote of him in these words : "If we take his character comparatively Shujaa O'Dowla will be allowed considerable merit : *active and vigorous in his mind, he was bold, daring and enterprising, which he manifested on various occasions and in situations of danger and difficulty.*"<sup>24</sup> And finally, Shuja-ud-daulah's active part in various fields of battle, such as Panipat, Panch-pahari and Buxar in which he personally commanded his troops, with whom he shared the toils and risks of the campaigns,<sup>25</sup> give the lie to the theory so maliciously propounded by Champion and his right-hand man, Macpherson, and unsuspectingly believed by some of his contemporaries.

Shuja-ud-daulah was something more than a brave and successful soldier. He was also a military organiser, reformer and administrator. To him belongs the credit of being one of the first eighteenth-century Indian rulers to perceive the necessity of replacing the outworn medieval army of his day by a scientifically trained force, consisting mainly of modern infantry and artillery. He became the founder and organiser of a new model army for Oudh which could compare, and not unfavourably, with that of their foreign neighbours in Bengal in respect of organisation, training, discipline and equipment. Recruited personally by himself as far as possible, paid directly from the state treasury, drilled and officered after European model by men of his own choice and equipped with weapons which were not inferior to those of Europeans in India, his battalions looked formidable and excited jealousy and fear of the neighbouring powers. He realised the value of artillery in modern warfare and established an up-to-date foundry which turned out cannon of the latest design, calibre and efficiency, and the guns, muskets and other small arms manufactured in his arsenals extorted the admiration from English observers and experts and were considered by them "by no means inferior in quality to the very best exported (from Europe)

<sup>24</sup> *History of the Reign of Shah Aulum*, 1934 ed. p. 67.

<sup>25</sup> The reader is referred to Vol. I. of this work.

to India.”<sup>26</sup> His organising ability was much in evidence in his military reforms as well as in his intelligence service which was the most efficient in the entire country. His personal attention, vigilance and activity were responsible for what Verelst described as “amazing improvements.” He was the inspirer of a new hope among his troops and one of the foreign observers opined that he might transmit his name to posterity as a great warrior<sup>27</sup> and conqueror.

#### 6.—Shuja as a diplomat.

Although pre-eminently a soldier, Shuja-ud-daulah was a diplomatist of no mean order. Endowed with a sense of realism, political sagacity and a fund of common-sense, he could easily grasp the essentials of a political or diplomatic situation and he always attempted to turn it to his advantage, first by diplomacy and failing that by force of arms. But before undertaking an enterprise he acquainted himself with the strength and weakness and the vulnerable points in the position of his enemy, and he endeavoured to make out a diplomatic case in his favour prior to having recourse to military force. If he found at any stage in the progress of an enterprise that his ambition had overstepped the bounds of his capacity, he had the sagacity enough to retrace his steps and to retrieve his position by other means. During the early years of his reign when the Marathas enjoyed the position of arbiters in north-Indian politics and the highest offices in the empire, like those of prime minister and commander-in-chief, to say nothing of lesser ones such as governorship of the provinces, could be bought with their assistance and had to be relinquished at their frown, Shuja-ud-daulah kept up a show of friendship with them and got their moral support, and yet he managed to avoid compliance with their proposal of entering into a definite engagement with them that might involve the cession of

<sup>26</sup> Verelst's letter dated April 10, 1768.

<sup>27</sup> *Mrs. Kindersley*, Letter No. 49, p. 204.

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any part of his territory or loss of any portion of his revenue. That this was no mean diplomatic achievement can be seen from the fact that the Maratha policy had during that epoch aimed at the acquisition of the seats of Hindu pilgrimage in Oudh, that is, Ayodhia, Benares and Allahabad which were the biggest and most populous towns in his dominions, besides at trying to keep him stripped of real political independence. Next, he played the dominant role of a peace-maker during the long-drawn Maratha-Afghan contest and his clever diplomacy culminated in shifting the centre of political gravity from Poona and Delhi to Faizabad. Before launching his famous campaign against the English in Bengal in 1764, he made out a clear, cogent and practically unanswerable diplomatic case against the company's representatives, which despite all the retaliatory messages of the Fort William council and their chief commander John Carnac and the wazir's subsequent failure in the military contest that followed, must always remain a memorable document in the history of the Indo-British struggle for mastery over the country. After the treaty of Allahabad his skilful diplomacy can easily be traced in his successful attempts at maintaining the integrity and independence of his dominions from the danger of an encroachment by the veiled though certain policy of expansion of his new allies the English in Bengal, in his acquiring an effective control over the affairs of Shah Alam, in getting the unjust treaty of 1768 annulled and in retaining in his service till his death a corps of French troops under Gentil in spite of great diplomatic pressure from the successive English governors from Clive to W. Hastings. By a series of diplomatic manoeuvres he kept himself aloof from the English policy of making him take the lead in the formation of a coalition of north-Indian powers against the Marathas. He showed even greater skill in winning the

<sup>28</sup> Gentil was nominally dismissed by Shuja owing to Hastings' repeated requests on May 14, 1774 *vide* C.P.C., IV. 1073), but he really continued to reside with him till his death. (See Gentil's *Memoirs*).

company's military assistance in his aggressive scheme of conquest of Ruhelkhand against a power with whom the English were on friendly terms. Shuja-ud-daulah's force of character and diplomacy were responsible, by diverting the English attention from scheme to scheme, for preventing Oudh from falling into a position of absolute subordination to the company's government in Bengal—a fate that befell it as soon as his masterful personality was removed from the scene by the cruel hand of death.

### 7.—As a ruler and administrator.

Except in the first few years of his reign when he was immersed in pleasures, Shuja-ud-daulah proved himself to be an efficient ruler and administrator. His dominions enjoyed internal tranquillity and peace and freedom from foreign invasion at a time when all other parts of India (except Bengal after 1756) were subject to periodical Maratha visitation and lived under a perpetual threat of external aggression. Internal feuds and rebellions were few and far between as compared with the times of his father and grandfather, and a defiant taluqdar was becoming a thing of the past. He administered justice with a strong hand, and though in all cases it was not absolutely even justice, he was on the whole “an excellent magistrate, a lover of justice.....” His military reforms and intelligence service reveal not only his organising capacity, foresight and love of details, but also his appreciation of the needs and demands of the age. His economic policy safeguarded the interests of his people, saved Oudh industry and commerce from an unfavourable competition with the foreign merchants from Bengal, prohibited the export of gold, silver and other precious specie and metals, and all through maintained the balance of trade in his country's favour. He wisely encouraged the extension of cultivation, if it is permissible to infer from the high state of agricultural prosperity. Grain, clothing and other articles of common necessity were more abundant and much cheaper



in Oudh than in the territory under the English company,<sup>29</sup> and literature and art flourished in every corner of his dominions. Most of the above success must be ascribed to the wazir himself and not solely to the ability of his officers as George Forster has wrongly supposed. Shuja was the mainspring of his entire administrative machinery, responsible for the initiation of all his policies and their execution, and contemporary English as well as Indian observers maintained that "he plans, directs, oversees and executes everything himself."<sup>30</sup> If his officers carried out his instructions faithfully and contributed to the success of his administration, Shuja must get the credit for choosing able and loyal assistants and for supervising their work. His carefulness about the details of the revenue, finance and military departments is testified by many an English officer. The English commander-in-chief advised his subordinates to be careful in making purchases for the English army in Shuja's service, for the wazir, he added, would not pass anything without proper scrutiny and would raise objections if purchases were made at a price higher than that prescribed by him.<sup>31</sup> George Forster and long after him Sir Henry Lawrence expressed the opinion that the security and extension of Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions were due to his connection with the English.<sup>32</sup> While it must be admitted that there is some truth in their contention inasmuch as this alliance exerted a wholesome influence on his neighbours and secured the English assistance against the Marathas and in the conquest of Ruhelkhand,

<sup>29</sup> Col. Thomas Deane Pearse to General Pattison, 1772, *vide British Indian Military Repository*, Vol. I. p. 20.

For his love of justice see Francklin's *Shah Aulum*, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Verelst's view of the English Govt. in Bengal, p. 103. See also Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 6, 1768 and Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 17, 1768.

<sup>31</sup> *Soldiering in India*, pp. 117, 118 and 138.

<sup>32</sup> *A Journey from Bengal, etc.*, by George Forster, Vol. I. p. 183; *The Kingdom of Oude, vide Calcutta Review* of 1845, and *Essays on the Indian Army and Oude*, p. 284.

it will be missing the truth as a whole, if one forgets, firstly, that before this connection when the political situation was even worse owing to Maratha ascendancy, he had not only successfully defended his frontiers but also played an aggressive part in foreign politics, secondly, that his military strength after 1765 was much greater than ever before and that of the rival Indian powers relatively less, and thirdly, that the same British connection which is given credit for the expansion of his dominions became responsible for their contraction immediately after his death and on the accession of his son Asaf-ud-daulah. Is it not therefore more reasonable and true to conclude that it was Shuja's character and policy that succeeded in hiring the British troops and employing them in pursuit of his aggressive schemes of conquest and against the declared intention of the company that was the real cause of the said extension ?

#### 8.—Shuja neither loyal nor patriotic.

Conscious of the fact that he was an Indian and India his motherland, Shuja rightly believed that it was at once unwise and difficult to identify himself politically, racially or culturally with his co-religionists of Persia or Afghanistan, and this was one of his greatest objections to an alliance with Ahmad Shah Abdali of Kabul<sup>33</sup> in 1760. He knew that it was unpatriotic to have allied himself with the English and that was why he told them time and again that his unpopularity<sup>34</sup> was due to his alliance with them which meant a great sacrifice on his part. At an early age he had recognised that Hindus and Musalmans must always live together in the country and it was highly injudicious for either of the two communities to alienate the other by injuring its religious susceptibilities. He did all in his power to secure the dead bodies of Viswas Rao, the Bhau and other

<sup>33</sup> *Shuja-ud-Daulah*, Vol. I. p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Champion to Hastings, 29th January, 1773, *vide* Ben. Sel. Com. Progs, 15th Feb. 1773.

Maratha victims at Panipat in 1761 from the Afghans for their cremation according to Hindu rites, and he told the victorious Shah that if he refused to comply with his request, Indian Musalmans, who had to live with the Hindus all through their lives, would suffer and not he who was a foreigner.<sup>35</sup> He had also genuine love for his hereditary dominions which he had succeeded in converting into a virtual kingdom. But all this was the result of considerations of practical politics and love of personal and family interests. He had no patriotism, much less of an instinctive and emotional variety, for the country as a whole, and, like most of his Indian contemporaries, he always subordinated national interests to those of his dominions and of himself. Nor was he at all loyal to his nominal suzerain, the Mughal emperor or the empire itself. As a matter of fact he was eager to barter away the interest of the empire and the entire country for a trifling personal gain : he was the first Indian prince of note to express his willingness to accept the sovereignty of the king of England in place of that of the Mughal emperor, to offer to coin rupees in the name of George III and to act as the latter's prime minister (wazir) in India,<sup>36</sup> at a time (1773) when the titular Shah Alam was still ruling at Delhi and the English had yet to establish their claim as a paramount power in the land. English writers are never tired of eulogising Warren Hastings for his political vision as reflected in his so-called proposal for the feasibility of the establishment of the king of England's sovereignty in India in place of the Mughal emperor's by asking Indian princes to enter into a subordinate alliance with the British Crown ; but they forget that the suggestion first came from the mind of Shuja-ud-daulah and Hastings only elaborated the idea in communicating it to his countrymen in England. In asking for direct relationship with the British Crown through the crown representative and without the medium of the

<sup>35</sup> *Shuja-ud-Daulah*, Vol. I. p. 105.

<sup>36</sup> C.P.C., IV. 478 ; Gleig, *Life of W. Hastings*, Vol. II. pp. 136-137. Shah Alam was aware of Shuja's disloyalty.

parliaments, British and Indian, Indian princes of our time echo the sentiments expressed by Shuja-ud-daulah more than a century and a half ago.

### 9.—Shuja's place as a ruler.

Despite the blemishes of his private life and lack of that sturdy and instinctive patriotism which is the fountain of right conduct and an antidote to sectional or individual selfishness, Shuja-ud-daulah was at his death the most notable Indian ruler of his time. Surajmal and Najib-ud-daulah had passed away years before 1775; Madho Rao Peshwa's brilliant and promising career was cut short by the cruel hand of Fate in 1772, and Mahadji Sindhia had not yet fully come into his own. The vastness of his territorial possessions and revenues, the efficiency and strength of his military establishment, the hereditary, political and aristocratic importance of his family and above all his own personal character of which the dominant features were energy and ambition, combined to give him an unchallenged position among the contemporary rulers in the land and make him an object of suspicion on the part of the English. He was not inferior to any of the English governors of Bengal, Clive and Hastings not excepting, in natural gifts and talent, political sense and sagacity, diplomatic skill and organising ability. Nor did he suffer by comparison with them in respect of purely moral virtues, if we ignore his inordinate love of sexual indulgence, for both Clive and Hastings, to say nothing of lesser Englishmen, were equally fond of private gain, often by questionable means and did not care for moral scruples in the pursuit of private ends. But he had to yield to them, even the most insignificant of them, such as Verelst or Cartier, in their love of order and discipline, in their steady pursuit of a well-thought-out national policy, whether their own or bequeathed to them by their predecessor, in their habit to confer and work together for any common objective and above all in their patriotic fervour and desire to place their national interests above those of their

own. The sum total of his achievement is without doubt less than Clive's or Hastings's ; but it must be mentioned to Shuja's credit that he left to his son double the dominions and revenues he had inherited from his father and a reformed modern army, unknown to any Indian State of his day, and that under him the people of Oudh were more prosperous and happy than the people of Bengal under any English governor from Clive to Cornwallis. Among the rulers of his own dynasty, both before and after him, he was probably the most successful, if not the best, and the aged historian Harcharan Dass who was an eye-witness of the effects of his administration from its very inception and survived him by several years sketched his character a few years after his death in these words: "He was an extremely well-intentioned ruler. There was abundant prosperity (literally blessing) during his reign ; people lived in satisfaction and the towns and markets were full of life. From the day of his death prosperity, happiness and brilliance have departed from the world." <sup>37</sup>



## CHAPTER XXI

### ADMINISTRATION

#### 1. The extent of Shuja's dominions.

Shuja-ud-daulah had inherited from his father a compact dominion consisting only of the two provinces of Oudh and Allahabad. But a considerable territory that formed part of the Allahabad *subah* had never been in the possession of Safdar Jang. Most of Bundelkhand (except the district of Kalpi that belonged to the Agra province), though nominally included in Allahabad, was independent under Bundela chiefs, the most notable among whom was Hindu-pati of Mahoba. Notwithstanding Shuja's ambitious schemes, incessant diplomacy and one after another four well-planned military expeditions, his dream of recovering that valuable region of diamond mines remained unfulfilled. But he succeeded where his father had failed and practically doubled the extent and revenues of his hereditary dominions by making conquests in the west and south-west, which brought to him the whole of Ruhelkhand, besides Etawah and the neighbouring territory right up to Agra and the vicinity of Aligarh. In October 1774, a few months before his death, Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions comprised nearly the whole of the modern United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, except the districts of the Upper Doab from Garhwal to Agra and those of the Jhansi division, and extended from the Himalayas in the north to Bundelkhand in the south, from the Karamnasa and the province of Bihar in the east to the Ganges in the west. They were bounded in the north by the hills and forests of the Himalayan Tarai, in the north-east by the upper course of the Gandak, in the east by a line drawn from the Gandak to the walls of the towns of Chhaprah and Buxar and by the Karamnasa, in the south

by the Karamnasa, the Son and the Jamuna, and in the west by a line emerging from near the vicinity of Agra on the Jamuna to Ramghat on the Ganges and proceeding along the course of the latter river to Hardwar and beyond into the hills. The whole territory was divided into four provinces, namely, Oudh, Allahabad, Ruhelkhand and the mid-Doab (consisting of Etawah and the neighbouring territory and extending as far north as Ramghat). It included the estates of his three principal vassals, the rajah of Benares, and the nawabs of Farrukhabad and Rampur.

## 2. Central Government.

Shuja-ud-daulah was in theory nothing more than an hereditary governor owing allegiance to his Mughal suzerain, Shah Alam II of Delhi. But in actual practice he behaved like an independent ruler, and although he refrained from adopting the visible symbols of Muslim sovereignty, such as the recitation of the Khutba, minting of coins in his own name, he exercised the less spectacular but more substantial royal prerogatives of appointing and dismissing his ministers, giving the law to his people and controlling his home and foreign policy. His administration, internal and external, was not subject to control by any outside authority,<sup>1</sup> and a popular balad known as the *Jangnama* of Wazir Ali Khan, referring to Shuja's son and immediate successor said that "you may call him nawab, but in fact he was King of the land."<sup>2</sup> Shuja-ud-daulah possessed and exercised the autocratic powers of his contemporaries on the thrones of European countries minus their enlightenment and national patriotism. His power and prestige were considerably

<sup>1</sup> Shuja did not recognise any grant of land made by the titular Mughal emperor in his *subahs*. Charles Alfred Elliot's investigation led him to the conclusion that "No Delhi *sunnud* exists in the Oanao district and probaly none in Oudh which is dated during Shuja-o-Dowla's reign." See *Chronicles of Oanao*, p. 24. The English interference began from the time of his son.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

enhanced by two factors—his being the head of the Shia population of Northern India and the hereditary prime minister of the yet morally sound empire. There was no constitutional check on his will, which was unhampered by any other considerations except those of expediency—safety and peace of his dominions and immemorial political and social conventions of the land. He kept in his hands all the strings of policy and his ministers and other officers only executed his orders.

The main offices and the duties appertaining to them may conveniently be summarized here.

*The Naib.* The highest officer was officially known as *naib* or deputy, as the nawab himself was *subahdār* or governor. The titles were a relic from the days of the empire when both the subahdar and naib, who was his official subordinate but no servant, were appointed by the emperor and worked under his orders. The position was now reversed. The nawab was independent and the naib his servant, appointed and dismissed at his will, and responsible to his master for day-to-day administration. The naib may therefore be conveniently designated as the nawab-wazir's prime minister. His duties were not clearly defined ; but he was particularly in charge of the portfolios of law and order, had to be a soldier, an administrator and a diplomat, and had to act for his master during his illness or absence or whenever he was especially commanded to do so. The nature and scope of his duties depended upon the ability and character of the individual naib, but it may be observed in general terms that all the naibs of Shuja were the executors of his will. "Since the late Nawab used to discharge all business personally," writes Abu Talib, "Naibs were men of no influence."<sup>3</sup> Shuja's first naib was Ismail Khan Kabuli who had earned for himself special regard of the Oudh ruling family, of the official world and the people by his signal services to Safdar Jang and consequently his position was not merely

<sup>3</sup> *Abu Talib*, p. 3.

that of a prime minister but also of the guardian and guide of the young nawab throughout his tenure of office (5th October 1754-13th October 1755). Shuja being then absorbed in youthful sports, the authority and work of administration were concentrated in Ismail Khan's hands, and as he was also the head of the Mughalia force, the naib acted like a *de facto* ruler till his death in October, 1755. His successor Musawi Khan (October 1755 to 1756) does not seem to have been a man of outstanding ability or character and he succeeded to the office but not to the authority of his predecessor. At any rate he did not leave the impress of his personality on the administration. He was succeeded by Khawaja Tamkin who seems to have acted only for a year or two during the course of which he had to resign twice. The fourth incumbent of the office was the famous Maharaja Beni Bahadur who was an able and energetic officer and filled the naib's post from 1759 to February 1767. He was employed in every kind of work, had his hold over every department of administration and figured as an important administrator, diplomat and financier. Though not a distinguished soldier he led many an expedition against the rebellious barons of Oudh and against the Marathas and Ruhelas and took part in most of the wars which his master had to fight. His boundless influence with the wazir led to the formation of a party headed by Salar Jang, which together with his own faults brought about his downfall in February 1767. The fifth and last Naib was Muhammad Elich Khan who, though nominally the head of a large contingent of troops, possessed no aptitude for a soldier's profession and much less for unravelling the intricacies of finance. But he was a clever diplomat and was present with his master in all his important negotiations whether with the Delhi court or with the English, and his chief qualifications were his loyalty and constant attendance on and personal services to the wazir. He, however, possessed no real power and was a mere agent of Shuja. It is noteworthy that all these naibs were men of obscure birth and except Musawi Khan (who

too was otherwise a mediocre) were illiterate, transacting official business and correspondence with the help of able and experienced assistants, and maintaining a big office with many clerks and accountants. It may be assumed from the practice during the days of the empire, that all important papers, whether of civil or military departments, had finally to pass through the naib's office and to bear his seal before being despatched for execution.

*The Diwan.* The next important officer was the diwan, who had enjoyed an equality of status with the governor during the palmy days of the Mughal empire, but was now definitely inferior in status and authority even to the naib. Like his colleague the naib, he was appointed by the nawab and was responsible to him only ; but in actual practice he was also a subordinate of the naib and had to carry out his orders. After the retirement of Shuja's first diwan Rajah Ram Narain and the appointment of his son Maha Narain, who was addicted to drink and debauchery, the prestige of the diwan's office seems to have suffered progressive deterioration until its amalgamation in 1759 with the prime minister's post under Beni Bahadur. After Beni Bahadur's fall, however, the two offices were separated and Rajah Surat Singh, who was a Khatri and a relative of Ram Narain, was appointed diwan (February 1767). Under him the revenue department revived something of its former glory and usefulness. Possessed of a long experience of revenue administration and endowed with the uncommon qualities of steadiness of character, equanimity of temper, loyalty to his master and sympathy for the people, he deservedly earned the reputation for honesty and good temper that had never been the lot of any of his predecessors. "Not a single soul was dissatisfied with him," writes Sultan Ali, author of the *Maadan-us-Saadat*, "and whoever came to see him went out [of his office] happy and pleased."<sup>4</sup> He continued in office till Shuja's death.

<sup>4</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 261b. See also *Abu Talib*, p. 2 ; *Memoirs of Faizabad and Delhi*, II. p. 19.



The *diwan* was the head of the revenue department and obviously his important duties were the assessment and collection of revenues, keeping a register of the income and expenditure, and checking and auditing revenue papers from the districts and parganas. The administration being highly centralised, all the district revenue officers were appointed by the nawab himself; but the diwan seems to have enjoyed the privilege of nominating lower revenue officers in the parganas and his voice counted for much in the government's relations with zamindars and taluqdars, and he had a hand in the selection of farmers of revenue and in the determination and fixation of the amount of revenue charged from each *chaklu*.

*The Khan-i-Saman.* Another office that possessed the importance and dignity of a department was that of khan-i-saman or the controller of the household. He was in charge of the *harem*, the kitchen, the wardrobe (*toshak khana*) and various other institutions connected with the private life and affairs of the wazir and the ruling family. Maulvi Fazal Azim was Shuja's khan-i-saman with Hasan Raza Khan as his deputy, and on his death the latter succeeded him as head of the office. Hasan Raza Khan was related to the wazir's family, being sister's son of Kalb Ali Khan whose daughter was married to Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-mulk, and was endowed with intelligence, resolution and perseverance. But he was at the same time easy-going and parsimonious, and as he served Shuja as a faithful servant without presuming on the close relationship with his grandfather, he secured a place in his affection.<sup>5</sup> Each of the institutions that comprised the household department was under a *darogha* or superintendent, with an office consisting of an accountant, a head clerk and a number of clerks and menial servants. In some cases two institutions were put in charge of one *darogha*. Ambar Ali Khan, for example, was allowed to combine *toshak khana* and the kitchen under him and he was permitted to absent himself from the headquarters whenever he accompanied the

<sup>5</sup> *Abu Talib*, p. 4.

nawab on tours and expeditions.

*Charity and Nazul.* There seems to have been no *Muhtasib* or censor of public morals, and there was certainly no *Sadr* or officer in charge of religious endowments and charity. But Shuja every year set apart certain sums of money for charitable purposes, especially for distribution among pious Sayyids, and it was entrusted to the chief physician Mualij Khan, son of Hakim Muqarib Khan. But the physician had earned notoriety for misappropriating a part of the money for his own private ends.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these there was a *bayutat* whose duty was to register the property of deceased persons, particularly nobles and officers, in order to secure the dues of the state and to escheat the whole of their property if they had died without a natural or adopted heir, and a part of it, if they left an heir behind. Rai Patar Chand was Shuja's chief *bayutat* with several assistants under him, and the nature of his duties had brought him much unpopularity. He was, however, a notable and trusted officer, and besides being the head of bayutat's office, he was also head clerk of the treasury office and superintendent of the Bakhshi's office.<sup>7</sup>

*The Bakhshi.* The bakhshi was responsible for keeping an account of the salaries and grades of military officers and troops and for the disbursement of the same. While the Mughal Mir Bakhshi under the later emperors had risen to be the chief commander of the imperial forces, Shuja's bakhshi continued to be merely a paymaster. The office was not of as much consequence as of the diwan or of the *khan-i-saman*, and there is little reference to it in the pages of the contemporary writers.

#### *The Department of Justice.*

The authorities are silent as to the agency through which judicial administration was carried on, and also on the procedure and system of laws. Although the nawab-wazir considered himself to be the fountain-head of justice, and

<sup>6</sup> *Harcharan*, 505a.

<sup>7</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 261b.

besides constituting himself as the highest court of appeals decided sometimes preliminary cases, there must have been a supreme judicial officer for the whole of his dominions, for we know that under the Mughals there was a kazi in each province and a chief kazi in Oudh under Shuja's successors. We are, however, on absolutely firm ground regarding the judicial administration of the principal divisions or provinces in each of which the *faujdar* was entrusted with this work in addition to his main duty as an executive officer in charge of law and order. In the districts *amils* and in the towns *kotwāls* acted as judges, while much of the local judicial administration in villages and even in towns, especially relating to causes arising out of social and civil disputes, was in the hands of *panchayats*. Important civil and criminal cases in the rural areas were decided by zamindars and taulqdars in their respective areas. Fresh laws were not made and cases were decided according to customary as well as written Hindu and Muslim laws that came down from the past. Criminal law seems to have been harsh and arbitrary and in some cases barbarous punishment was inflicted for petty offences. For example, without proper trial certain drunkards were condemned to suffer amputation of their arms at Shuja's orders, some other offenders had their ears and noses cut off, and a whole family of many members was consigned to die because the head of that family was found guilty of embezzlement of state money.<sup>8</sup>

*Intelligence, Foreign and Military Departments.*

The nawab kept the above portfolios in his own hands. The Intelligence Service was reckoned as a branch of the military administration and was placed under a *darogha* (superintendent) who was directly responsible to Shuja as the head of the army. In the regulation of foreign relations and diplomacy the nawab was assisted by the naib, while in the general management of the army, such as, military regulations, discipline, reviews etc., he was helped

<sup>8</sup> For the above punishment see above pp. 136-137.

by Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan who, besides being the commander of one of the finest divisions in the wazir's army, was also superintendent of the hall of public audience and something like his military secretary. That was why he was sometimes unofficially known as a second naib.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Local Administration

Of the four provinces into which Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions were divided, two, namely Oudh and Allahabad, were well-regulated *subahs* and subdivided into sixteen districts (*sarkars*), each of which was placed under an *amil*. The *amil* was essentially a revenue collector; but he was also the head of the *silahdari* troops stationed in the district for assisting him in the realisation of revenue from zamindars, was responsible for the maintenance of law and order and for the administration of civil and criminal justice in the district. The *amil's* power was limited by the extent of the control exercised by the wazir, who was in touch with his doings through the reports of the spies and news writers appointed by him (wazir) in each district. Each district was divided into a number of parganas<sup>10</sup> or *chaklas* with a tahsildar at the head of each who had practically the same duties to discharge in the pargana as the *amil* in the district. Every city, every town and in fact each big village with a considerable population and trade had a kotwal who, with his staff, the strength of which varied according to the character and number of the population of the area under him, was charged with the duties of maintaining peace and order and dispensing criminal justice within his jurisdiction. Villages were practically autonomous so far as measures regarding watch and ward, settlement of disputes, education, sanitation, public works, poor and medical relief, fairs and festivals and arrangements for recreation, etc., were concerned.

<sup>9</sup> *Abu Talib*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> The divisions are given in Abu-Talib's work.

There were, however, three officers in each village who, though they were servants of the village community and not of the central government, were partly controlled by the wazir through the tehsildars and amils. They were the *patwari*, the *chaukidar* and the *muqaddam*. The first was the village accountant and maintained a record of the names of the cultivators, the number of fields, total produce of each field, the share of the zamindars and of the government etc., etc. The *chaukidar* was the village watchman and the *muqaddam* the headman, who, besides several other duties, assisted the tehsildar in the work of revenue collection.

The Doab, which was acquired in 1773, was constituted into a separate province and placed under the Gosain chief, Anup Giri, who was officially designated *faujdar*, but was in fact a veritable governor with full control over the amils and other officers in the *subah*. He was not required to furnish an account of the income and expenditure of the province and had to pay a fixed sum of money every year in a number of instalments.<sup>11</sup>

The fourth and the last province with its headquarters at Bareilly, where resided the governor Mirza Saadat Ali Khan, was Ruhelkhand. It was divided into three parts, northern, central and southern with a *faujdar* in charge of each part. The *faujdar*s were responsible to the governor for the maintenance of law and order in their respective divisions and were probably empowered to appoint amils for revenue collection and administering justice. The famous Abyssinian captain Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan was *faujdar* of the northern division, a difficult charge in view of its geographical situation, and the revenues of this division were farmed out to him for a fixed sum of money.<sup>12</sup>

As the Doab and Ruhelkhand were recent acquisitions, their administration was military in character. Besides being ruled by military governors they had garrisons of troops stationed in suitable localities. Their revenue

<sup>11</sup> S. P. D., Vol. XXXI. 280.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*



administration was not regularised and crude system of farming of revenues was introduced.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4. Revenue Administration.

Despite paucity of contemporary evidence, it is clear from a close study of the subject that Shuja-ud-daulah did not have one uniform revenue policy and the same system of assessment and collection of the state share of the produce of the soil for all the districts in his dominions. Various parts of his dominions differed so widely in administrative usage and practice that a uniformity of revenue rules and regulations was difficult to be established within a short period. His dominions had in fact all the four land tenure systems, namely, *zamindari*, *jagirdari* or *inam*, *rayatwari*, and *ijara* (farming), then known to India, working side by side in different areas. In most parts of Oudh and Allahabad and more particularly in the former where the greater portion of the country was in the hands of powerful hereditary taluqdars, as it is to-day, *zamindari* system was prevalent. A fixed sum of money, which had the appearance of revenue, but was in fact tribute, was charged from each taluqdar who was averse to submit to any further exaction on any other account and who did not agree to an addition to the tribute except at the point of the bayonet. Those parts of the provinces that were not in the possession of the zamindars or were not given away in assignment, constituted the *khalsa* or the reserved land and in a special sense the property of the wazir, and were directly administered by the officers of the state under the general supervision of the central government. The state dealt directly with the cultivators in such areas. The provinces of mid-Doab and Ruhelkhand were farmed out for a fixed sum of money to powerful individuals, who kept for themselves what was left out of

<sup>13</sup> S. P. D., Vol. XXXI. 280.

their collections after the payment of the state dues. Shuja's policy aimed at abolishing jagirdari system and in pursuance of this policy he not only did not make further grants of land to any of his officers but also escheated to the state those lands that had been assigned to Shaikhs, Sayyids, and other religious or scholarly men.<sup>14</sup> Yet it is too much to assume that there were no jagirdars in Oudh or Allahabad during his time. Within six months of his death their presence in a large number is proved by a despatch from the political Resident to the Bengal government<sup>15</sup>. The jagirdars paid nothing to the state except rendering personal, military or religious service. Jagirdars possessed the same privileges in their jagir lands as the zamindars in their zamindari lands.

The enquirer has to face the same difficulties in his quest regarding the mode of assessment of the produce of the soil. But, as the usages in vogue in modern Oudh in the twentieth century are practically the same as those that obtained in the 16th century and described in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, it may be assumed that the latter have been transmitted to us through the centuries,<sup>16</sup> probably, with nominal modifications. The chief modes of assessment under Shuja seem to have been three, as they are now, namely, *naqdī* or *jamāi*, *batāi* or *ghallā-bakhshī*, and *kankut* or *muqtāi*. *Naqdī Zabti* is a sort of contract between the individual peasant and the zamindar or the amil, which fixes in cash the rate of the rent per *bigha* of land per year, irrespective of crops or total produce, for three years or more. The rate depends upon the fertility of the soil

<sup>14</sup> In July 1757 Shuja issued an ordinance confiscating many free-grant lands and substituting cash payments in place of jagirs. Eleven years later, that is, in July 1768, he went a step further, and stopped cash payments too, causing financial distress to many hundreds of families. The above measure was equally applicable to religious and educational endowments. See *Siyar*, III. 940; *Tabsir*, 682.

<sup>15</sup> *W. Hastings and Oudh*, p. 87.

<sup>16</sup> *Ain*, Vol. I. 296, 303; Vol. II. 5-6, 44.

and its situation, such as nearness to water, and may therefore vary from field to field in the possession of the same peasant. The tenant is at liberty to raise more than one crop a year and he can expect no remission for failure of the crop owing to a draught, excessive rain or any other natural calamity. Nor is the rent enhanced during the period of contract, even if the crops raised are far more rich than normal. *Batāi* means sharing the produce with the peasant, and this means of determining the state's share seems to have been the most primitive and popular in all ages. *Batāi* is of three kinds, *khet-batai*, *lānk-batāi* and *rasi-batāi*. The first means the determination of the landlord's share while the ripe crop is standing in the field or immediately after the field has been sown, by a division of the field itself, the crop of the one part going to the peasant and of the other to the zamindar or the state. But before dividing the crop, a part of it is left in the field for the village watchman, carpenter, blacksmith, washerman, barber, sweeper and the priest. According to the second, the peasant reaps the crop and brings it to the threshing ground where it is divided between him and the zamindar without the grain being separated from the husk and after giving away certain portion of it to the village watchman, and other workers each of whom gets what are known as *lehna*, *tihāi* and *anjuri* in addition.<sup>17</sup> The third means dividing the grain, after it has been separated from husk, between the two parties, after, of course, the village workers have been paid out of the common stock. *Kankut* implies a rough estimate of the produce of the soil without actually measuring the unthrashed crop or grain, and it is a cumbrous and disadvantageous mode of assessment for the cultivator, and sometimes for the zamindar also. When the crops have ripened but are still standing in the fields, the agent of the zamindar or of the government goes round each field,

<sup>17</sup> *Lehna* is a bundle of unthrashed crop, *tihāi* consists of grain calculated on the basis of the area of land under a cultivator, and *anjuri* is grain given as a charity.

accompanied by the village headman and one or two more responsible people, and each man separately makes an estimate of the total yield of each field, and the mean of all the separate estimates is set down as the total produce of the field on the basis of which the government's share is calculated. This estimate is exclusive of the village workers' wages. If the cultivator objects to the estimate as being too high, negotiations follow and after some higgling a compromise is arrived at. Out of the estimated produce as finally agreed upon between the parties, is allowed a deduction of 2 to 3 seers per maund called *chhūt* in case of every cultivator and a further deduction of  $6\frac{1}{2}$  seers per maund known as *kur* in case of every privileged peasant (who is either a village headman or a Brahman, Kshastriya or Kayastha), and the residue is divided into two equal parts, one representing the peasant's share and the other of the government's. After these processes are gone through the village weightsman (*taula*) is sent to the nearest market to ascertain the current prices of each kind of corn and the government's or zamindar's share is then commuted into cash. Thus according to each mode of assessment the zamindar's share is calculated after the village workmen have been paid from the common stock and it is usually less than half of the residue. Of the three systems *naqdī* or *jamai* has always been preferred by the peasants and *kankut* is least liked by them.<sup>18</sup>

Besides land revenue there must have been several other sources of the state's income. We know it for certain that there were excise and custom duties known as *sairs* ; but there is no means of ascertaining their number or their rates. Another important source of revenue was the escheat system, which was originally introduced by the Mughals, but had fallen into disuse since the decline of the empire. It was revived by Shuja who appropriated a certain

<sup>18</sup> The author is intimately acquainted with the working of all the three systems as they exist to-day, as his father was an important hereditary revenue officer in an estate in Oudh.

part of the property<sup>19</sup> of his deceased nobles and officers. There was no *jizjā*, but Hindu pilgrims to Benares, Allahabad, Ayodia and other sacred places had to pay a pilgrims' tax, as is clear from several contemporary Marathi letters and a court chronicle in Persian. The historian Harcharan Dass, a pensioner of Shuja, records that Kripa Dayal, faujdar of Allahabad, was in the habit of tyrannically demanding an exorbitant tax from the pilgrims to holy Prayag and one Deccani family consisting of eight persons, having been unable to pay more than two gold coins (*asharfis*) and a few rupees, was not allowed to take a dip in the Triveni and so they purchased fuel and oil and burnt themselves to death.<sup>20</sup> Shuja-ud-daulah might not have been responsible for the oppressive conduct of the tax collectors; but there is nothing on record to show that he brought them to account for their inhuman conduct or that he imposed a similar tax on Muslim pilgrims to Salar Masud's tomb at Bahraich or any other Muhammadan shrines in his dominions.

Shuja-ud-daulah's annual revenue in 1766, a year after the treaty of Allahabad, did not exceed two krors of rupees<sup>21</sup>. But at the time of his death in January 1775 it amounted to £3,600,000 sterling,<sup>22</sup> that is, three krors and sixty lakhs of rupees, calculating the value of £s at the rate of Rs. 10 each. The increase was due partly to the improved administration and personal vigilance of the wazir, but mainly to his acquisition of the districts of Kora and Allahabad (whose revenue was about thirty lakhs), the mid-Doab

<sup>19</sup> *Abu-Talib*, 97; *Maadan*, IV. 261 b.

<sup>20</sup> *Harcharan*, 511 a. The English also realised this tax during their temporary occupation of Oudh and Allahabad after the battle of Buxar. See S. P. D., XXIX. 86 and 110.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Dow, *History of Hindustan*, Appendix to vol. II. p. 91.

<sup>22</sup> *Burke's Speeches at Impeachment of W. Hastings*, (Calcutta ed. 1903) Vol. II. p. 155; Forster, *A Journey*, etc., II. p. 182; *Oudh Gazetteer* (orig. ed.) vol. I. 460, gives three krors. *Swanihat* (vol. I. p. 89), a later work, puts it as two krors and seventy lakhs.

Lawrence, *Kingdom of Oude*, vide *Essays on Indian Army and Oude*, p. 284, agrees in general terms with Burke.



(revenue 51 lakhs) and Ruhelkhand (sixty five lakhs).

The revenue was collected by amils and tahsildars with the help of muqaddams and chaudharis in *khalsa* villages but faujdars were entrusted with this work in the areas under zamindars and taluqdars.

The collections, together with the balance-sheets from each district, were lodged with the diwan after their arrival at the capital, and Shuja used to examine every day the consolidated balance-sheet for the whole of his dominions prepared by Surat Singh diwan from the district papers, and order Elich Khan and Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan to make speedy arrangements for the realization of the balances of the revenue from the district officers or their agents. The daily collections were divided into two halves, one was sent to be deposited with Bahu Begam and the other to the state treasury which was in charge of Patar Chand.<sup>23</sup>

The efficiency of Shuja's administration in general and finance and revenue departments in particular was not so much due to the excellence of the institutions as to his personal vigilance and control over the distant district and pargana officers. Several anecdotes of his active interest in the details of revenue administration and his prompt interference, if any kind of maladministration was reported to him by his spies, are recorded. One instance will suffice as an illustration. The amil of Khairabad (modern Sitapur) district relying on the strength of his troops and his intimate connection with the people, misbehaved and made some improper request. This annoyed the wazir who abolished the amil's post and summoning seven local Kayasthas, appointed each of them to one pargana, placing at their disposal a good contingent of troops for assistance in the work of revenue collection. He continued to supervise and control their work through correspondence and "the result was prosperity, economy in expenditure, a surplus of revenue

<sup>23</sup> *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad*, Vol. II. p. 19.

and all other tokens of a good administration.”<sup>24</sup>.

### 5. Religious Policy.

However orthodox in views and sentiments, Shuja was not in practice a fanatic in any sense of the term. In fact the politician and the statesman in him had so much widened his outlook that he could not act as a religious bigot, and his policy therefore was one of toleration. Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, he opened careers to talent irrespective of religious considerations, and appointed Hindus to highest posts in his gift. All the diwans of Shuja-ud-daulah were Hindus, as also most of the high officers as well as clerks in the revenue and finance departments. One out of his five naibs was a Brahman and this man was longer in office than any other naib under Shuja, wielded much greater power and influence than any of his predecessors and successors except Ismail Khan. Among less than two dozens of his first-rate military officers of various nationalities, such as French, Abyssinians and Indians, six were Hindus none of whom commanded less than a thousand troops, some of them being placed at the head of four to five thousand disciplined horse and foot. Shuja did not impose undue restrictions on the freedom of Hindu worship or the public celebration of their religious festivals. Tradition has it that many Hindu saints, who came from various parts of the country, were allowed to settle down in Ayodhia and granted plots of land for the erection of temples and *dharamshalas* for pilgrims. Five Jain temples built by one Kesari Singh, of course, with Shuja's permission, stood “even amongst the very mosques and tombs of the faithful.”<sup>25</sup> An order under Shuja's own signature conferring a plot of land in Ayodhia on a Hindu hermit named Abhai Ram Bairagi for laying out a garden and constructing a house [*dharamshala*] for the use of Hindu *faqirs* has been

<sup>24</sup> *Abu-Talib*, 6-7.

<sup>25</sup> See *Oudh Gazetteer* (original ed.) Vol. I. pp. 5-10.

preserved.<sup>26</sup> There was, however, one disability imposed upon the Hindus, namely, a pilgrims' tax, but it must be added in fairness to Shuja that this practice was a relic from the intolerant reigns of Aurangzeb and his immediate successor and that so far as the wazir was concerned it was retained primarily for financial gain.

Though true enough the above facts cannot by themselves form a complete picture of the wazir's religious policy or give its effect upon the vast majority of his subjects whose religion was different from his. However enlightened a medieval ruler professing a faith that believes in proselytism might have been, his court and his harem and clergy combined to exert an influence that normally went against the religious interests of the people who did not believe in the state religion. Even in the court of Akbar the Great whose name became a synonym of religious toleration and liberalism, Hindu artists "found it convenient and profitable to conform to Islam."<sup>27</sup> Shuja's court was no exception, as we have it on the testimony of a first-rate contemporary Muslim historian<sup>28</sup> that two notable Rajput taluqdars, compelled by peculiar personal circumstances and encouraged, no doubt, by the wazir's court, became converts to Islam. One of these was Hindupati, Sombansi chief of Pratabgarh who enrolled himself among Shuja's *chelas*, and the other was Mahabali, a Gaur Rajput and taluqdar of Akbarpur in the present Sitapur district. There is no record of humbler people who might have succumbed to a similar pressure.

<sup>26</sup> *Tarikh Oudh* of Najmul Ghani, Vol. V. p. 200.

<sup>27</sup> Smith, *Akbar the Great*, p. 422.

<sup>28</sup> *Hadia*, p. 674 ; *Oudh Gazetteer* (original ed.), Vol. II. 297.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ARMY

#### 1. Shuja's army before 1765.

The army that came to Shuja as an inheritance from his father was, besides a powerful park of artillery, about fifty thousand strong, next only to the imperial forces at Delhi in number and efficiency. The most highly prized branch was cavalry which numbered about 20,000 picked horse, consisting mainly of Qizilbashs, Irani and Turani Mughals, and Hindu Rajputs and Nagas or Gosains, noted for their reckless bravery and contempt of death. It was well-equipped and well-paid, the salary of a trooper ranging from fifty to sixty rupees a month. But the infantry, though more numerous, was of much less consequence and was ill-equipped and poorly paid, the pay of a foot-soldier not exceeding ten or twelve rupees per month. The artillery was crude and cumbrous, essentially medieval and inefficient. Before his defeat at Buxar the wazir's army was mercenary in character and lacked scientific training and discipline. The Mughals, dominated by greed for money and habitual love of plunder, were little amenable to rigorous discipline, were undependable in an hour of crisis, and fell on the baggage and effects of their master with as much avidity as on those of his enemy, whenever they could have an opportunity to do so. Their example had demoralizing effect on other troops and we find even the Nagas succumbing to the temptation of plunder in one of the battles. Thus the wazir's army before 1765 was a medieval institution in its composition, organisation, training and discipline and in the mercenary character of its troops and their out-of-date weapons.

There was, however, one small exception, namely, a contingent of about two hundred European troops, mostly French and some trained Indian sepoys with eight guns

divided into eight small battalions under Samru, Gentil and Madec ; but as they had been enlisted only a few months before the commencement of his memorable campaign against the English, they did not influence the nawab's military policy till, at any rate, after the conclusion of the treaty of Allahabad in 1765.

## 2. The Lesson of Buxar.

The engagement at Panch-pahari and much more than that the decisive battle of Buxar brought about a complete change in Shuja's military policy. He beheld with amazement the enemy's infantry, most of whom were recruited from his own dominions and particularly from Oudh and belonged to the same classes and castes as his own troops, standing like a wall against the onslaught of his superior numbers. His men were by no means inferior in physical strength, valour and disregard of danger and death ; but the enemy's sepoys, under the influence of European military training, were better soldiers and much more accustomed to act together and precisely in obedience to orders. Their weapons, especially firelocks and muskets were of the latest design and efficiency—a type then unknown in the country, and their field artillery more handy and better served than the wazir's cumbrous and out-of-date cannon. He could not fail to notice that his cavalry with its bow and arrow, sword and lance, and medieval muskets was particularly misfit in a modern battle. What must have bewildered him most was the mercenary character of his Mughals many of whom were in treacherous collusion with the enemy and deserted him to join the foreigners after the battle. The inevitable result of this sad experience was the conviction that his defeat was due to his troops being out-classed in training, discipline and weapons as well as to treachery on the part of his Mughal cavalry, and that a complete overhauling of his military policy on the basis of a scientific training and organisation of his troops on



Western lines was an indispensable necessity.

### 3.—Shuja modernizes his army.

This momentous decision proved to be of the highest consequence, as it led to a series of concerted ordinances which, coupled with vigorous action, modernized the Oudh army and made it such a powerful instrument of force as the province had never before seen. Immediately after making peace with the English, he issued an ordinance dismissing most of his Mughal troops still in his service ; another provided for enlistment of Rajputs, other martial castes among the Hindus and Indian Musalmans with sturdy and fleet horses, to fill the places of the disbanded Mughals. The wazir fully realising the value of well-trained infantry, reduced the number of cavalry and increased that of foot soldiers. A vigorous campaign of bringing able-bodied youths from all parts of the two provinces and even from beyond their boundaries was undertaken in right earnest, and experienced commanders, intimately acquainted with western military science and army organisation were appointed to train and officer them. Although he was obliged to remove Samru and Madec from his service and territory in accordance with a clause of the Allahabad treaty, he managed to retain the services of Gentil, an able French captain, till almost the very day of his death, and further employed some of Mir Qasim's veteran generals, Indian and Abyssinian. Gentil the French, Aratoon the Abyssinian and some other officers of note, who had seen service under English or French officers and a few under both, were commissioned to frame rules and regulations for the training and organisation of the new army. An arsenal was established at Faizabad under the French auspices, and guns, muskets and field artillery of good calibre and modern design and efficiency as well as lead shots and ammunition were manufactured on a large scale. Shuja-ud-daulah personally supervised training of his infantry battalions, spending several hours every day in overseeing the troops at drill, parade

and military review. He introduced the practice of paying his troops individually and regularly month by month and in cash from the state treasury, and no officer was allowed to draw the salary of any of the soldiers under his command. Within two years his army became, in respect of number, organisation, training and equipment, not only superior to its predecessor but also to those of other Indian princes. A European lady who visited Allahabad in June 1767 and stayed there for several months observed exactly two years after Shuja had made a treaty of peace with the English, that he "has modelled his army after the European manner; he makes constant improvements; he casts cannon, he disciplines his troops himself, and is indefatigable in the improvement of his army and in increasing his infantry, so much that none of the other Black Powers would be able to resist him. Such a man as Shuja, having none but the Hindoos or the Mohamedans of India to contend with, might transmit his name to posterity as a celebrated warrior, and conquer the chief parts of the Empire."<sup>1</sup>

#### **4. The English compel Shuja to reduce his army.**

Mrs. Kindersley's observations, based as they were on the information supplied to her by the English troops stationed at Allahabad, are notable not only for their accuracy but also for providing an authentic evidence that as early as August or September 1767 the English were keeping a vigilant eye on the wazir's military improvements and had even evinced a veiled jealousy of his rising power. This feeling could not remain concealed for a long time, and Richard Smith, taking the lead, made numerous reports to the Fort William council on the subject of the wazir's preparations and improvements and on the marvellous efficiency of his intelligence service which provided him with accurate details of happenings at the courts of other Indian rulers as well as at Calcutta. He worked hard to

<sup>1</sup> *Kindersley*, p. 204.

prove that the sole object of the wazir's extraordinary military activities was to fight a war of revenge and to attempt to drive the English from eastern India. Governor Verelst who had abundant reason to believe in the rectitude of Shuja's intention and had knowledge of the inadequacy of his means for such an enterprise, refused to believe Smith's charges and did nothing beyond asking him to keep a vigilant eye on the movements of the Oudh ruler. Several months after, however, when Smith returned to Calcutta from Allahabad and took his seat as a member of the council, he succeeded in forcing his views on his colleagues and persuading them to send a deputation consisting of three members of the council, including himself, to Oudh to reduce Shuja's army by a fresh treaty and failing that by force. The deputation accomplished the task by a mixed policy of persuasion, art and threat and obliged the wazir to reduce his force to 35,000 troops in all of whom only 10,000 were to be trained after European model.<sup>2</sup>

### 5. The strength of his army in 1775.

At the time of this treaty (1768) Shuja-ud-daulah's army numbered, according to the Bengal government's information, 15,825 cavalry under twenty commanders and 26,285 infantry commanded by ten or twelve officers, besides several hundred irregular troops and peons. His artillery consisted of 64 big modern guns, 13 of which were 9-pounders to 12-pounders and the remaining four to six pounders, fifty small pieces, all mounted on field-carriages, with tumbrels, timbers, elevating screws, etc. There were 164 camels with large pieces mounted on them and 525 boatmen to man

\* See chapter XII.

<sup>2</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Vol. I. of 1768, pp. 614-618.

The above figures seem to have been accepted by the Bengal govt. as correct. There are, however, a few more letters from Smith and Barker which give a slightly different figures. See Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Vol. I. of 1768, pp. 621-624.

the boats and throw a bridge on a river whenever the army had to cross it. Despite the limit imposed by the English, the strength of the wazir's army was not impaired to any appreciable degree. Its progress was temporarily checked, for he made no further addition to it. Nor did he fill up the gaps caused by retirement, death or resignation of some of his troops and officers. But he did not dismiss, it was confidently said, a single soldier in consequence of the above treaty. In September 1773 Hastings on his request cancelled the treaty of 1768 and removed the restrictions on the number of the troops in the wazir's army, and from that time Shuja resumed the open policy of rearmament to the utmost possible limit. In this work he achieved a remarkable success. An inventory taken after his death in January, 1775, revealed that the total number of military servants of all descriptions, including clerks in that department and peons, etc., in his service amounted to one lakh and fifty to sixty thousand. Of these eighty thousand must have been effective regular soldiers. His stables possessed 500 elephants and 3,000 horses (besides those given to the cavalry) and the number of his artillery pieces of various calibre and variety was indeed very large.<sup>4</sup>

The cavalry was 25,000 strong and commanded by Sayyid Jamil-ud-din Khan (1,500 horse), Sheikh Ahsan (500 horse), Mir Habibullah Khan (1,000 horse), Husain Khan (1,000 horse), Rajah Himmat Bahadur (2,000 horse), Umrao Giri (2,000 horse), Gopal Rao Maratha (3,000 horse), Bhau Singh (2,000 horse), Rai Singh Bundela (1,000 horse), Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan (3,000 horse), Mahbub Ali Khan (500 horse), Mir Naim Khan (4,000 horse, known as Risala-i-Sabit-Khani), Murtaza Khan Barij (1,200 horse), Abu Barakat Khan entitled Muzaffar-ud-daulah Tahawwar Jang of Kakori, Muhammad Muiz-ud-din Khan, Haider Beg Khan, Yusuf Khan Qandhari, Karam Beg Khan Mughal, Mir Sayyid Ali

<sup>4</sup> *Harcharan*, 517 b. *Maadan*, IV. 259b gives the total number of troops as one lakh and eighty thousand, horses 5,000, elephants 1,000, camels 5000, and transport oxen 50,000.

Muhammad Yar Khan, Mirza Taqi Khan, Baqir Khan and one or two others.<sup>5</sup>

The regular infantry, numbering over 50,000, was divided into about fifty battalions. Five battalions were commanded by Khwajah Basant the Primus who bore the designation of colonel, two by Mir Sayyid Ali who held captain's rank, two by Saif Ali, two by Bahadur Ber, four by Prasad Singh, three by Khwajah Pedrose Armenian, and four by Khwajah Gregory Armenian. Captain Mahbub Ali Khan was in charge of six battalions, clad in black uniform and called *Barq Paltans*. Four battalions in green uniform known as *Jhilangas* constituted a separate regiment under the command of Basant Ali Khan, the Secundus. Mir Ahmad commanded six battalions, about 8,000 strong, clad, like the Jhilangas, in green uniform, but differing from them in badges and weapons, and bore the name of *Najib Paltans*. Latafat Ali Khan was the head of a regiment of six battalions in green uniform and also called Najib Regiment, differing from the Najib Paltans of Mir Ahmad in some minor details of equipment and discipline. Danishmand Khan Khwajah-Sara commanded two battalions and three other eunuchs, Jawahar Ali Khan, Ambar Ali Khan and Usuf Ali Khan, were placed at the head of a few other battalions.<sup>6</sup> Besides these scientifically trained battalions, there were many hundreds of half trained infantry. For example, Himmat Bahadur, Umrao Giri, and several other commanders had some foot soldiers in their contingent in addition to cavalry, the principal branch of their arms.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the above, there were 200 to 400 French troops in the wazir's service, commanded by their countryman,

<sup>5</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 259b-260a; Ben. Sel. Com. Progs, Vol. I. of 1768, p. 614; *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad*, II. 6; *Imad*, 101-102.

<sup>6</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., Vol. I. of 1768, p. 615; *Maadan*, IV. 261b-262 b; *Memoris of Delhi and Faizabad*, II. p. 7. The last named work says that regular infantry numbered 80,000 and irregular 40,000. *Imad*, p. 102, gives the number of infantry as one lakh and thirty three thousand.

<sup>7</sup> *Maadan*, IV. 259 b.



M. Gentil, a captain and diplomat of reputation. Gentil had under him some well-trained and equipped Indian infantry, a few guns and some pieces of light field-artillery, the whole forming a self-contained unit.

## 6. How the army was organised.

The entire infantry was composed of seventy *paltans* or battalions, of which fifty consisted of regular and trained troops and the remaining twenty of half-trained soldiers. For purposes of training and organisation the regular battalions were divided into three classes, namely, Najib paltans, Tilanga paltans and Jhilanga paltans. In the Najib paltans the unit was formed by 25 troops; over every 25 Najib troops there was a Jamadar, over fifty Najibs a naib-tūmandār, over 100 a tūmandār and over 500 an ūlūsdar. The head of a Najib paltan was called sālār (commander). All the Najib troops of whatever rank belonged to noble birth, were dressed in green uniforms and were divided into two regiments, one under Mir Ahmad and the other under Latafat Ali Khan. The Tilangas were organised on almost similar lines. Seven Tilangas formed one unit and at their head was an amaldār. The commander of 15 was called havaldar, of 30 jamadar and of 100, that is, one full company was known as subahdar. The head of a Tilanga paltan bore the designation of kumaidan (commander). Tilangas were recruited from all classes of people and they wore black uniform. Jhilangas were similarly organised, but their uniform, like that of the Najibs, was of green colour, and unlike the Najibs and Tilangas who were armed with muskets and bayonets, they carried spears and pikes. They usually accompanied the nawab-wazir on march.<sup>8</sup>

There is nothing on record to show how the cavalry was organised. It seems that the lowest unit was formed by 25 troopers, and higher units were of 50, 100 and finally of

<sup>8</sup> *Imad*, pp. 101-102.

one paltan. The troopers and their officers wore red uniforms.

The troops were mostly Hindus, a large number of them being Rajputs and Kanyakubja Brahmans, from the nawab-wazir's own dominions, particularly from Oudh, and old soldiers already in service were made to stand surety for new recruits. At the time of recruitment the names of the villages from which the recruits came and other particulars about their relatives, etc., were recorded for apprehending deserters from the army and punishing them.<sup>9</sup> The infantry was armed with muskets and bayonets or firelocks which were by no means inferior to those imported from Europe for the English and French troops.<sup>10</sup> The cavalry was equipped with lances and spears besides muskets and swords. The Najib paltans were the most disciplined and efficient of the wazir's infantry, while the Naga troops under the two Gosain brothers, Himmat Bahadur and Umrao Giri, constituted according to the English<sup>11</sup> commander-in-chief Champion, his best cavalry.

The wazir's army, chiefly infantry and artillery-men, were given scientific military training after Western model by French, Armenian, Abyssinian and Indian officers who had themselves received training in English or French armies, and some in both. A regular drill and parade were made compulsory, regimental discipline was strictly enforced and distinctive uniforms and badges were, as we have seen, supplied to various divisions. Raw recruits after their enlistment were required to undergo exercise and drill morning and evening, and after a prescribed period they were supplied with bamboo staff and then with firelocks the use of which they were taught as fast as possible. They

<sup>9</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 6, 1768.

<sup>10</sup> Verelst's letter, April 10, 1768; Smith to Ben. Sel. Com. Feb. 6, 1768. See also *Memoirs of Dehli and Faizabad*, Vol. II. p. 7 which writes, "The English firelocks were nothing to their [Oudh troop's] matchlocks for quickness in loading and rapidity of firing."

<sup>11</sup> *Soldiering in India*, p. 123.

were assigned to a regular battalion only after this preliminary training for a fixed period had been gone through,<sup>12</sup> and thereafter they were subject to a rigorous military discipline. "He (Shuja) has adopted the use of court-martial," observes Smith, "and pays his sepoys regularly and enquires into all military matters himself; so attentive is he to the minutest transactions in his army, so vigilant in the detection and rigid in the punishment of every fraud and misdemeanour that a commandant of one of his battalions is banished to Chunargarh for twelve months for having dismissed a single sepoy and entertaining another without leave; and another commandant is confined to the same fort for some malpractices concerning sepoys' pay."<sup>12</sup>

### 7. Shuja's artillery.

The artillery was placed under the command of a Frenchman named M. Sosan (?) who was Gentil's comrade and had the experience of long service in the French army in Bengal. Besides two pieces of cannon attached to each battalion, there were at the end of 1768 as many as 64 big guns—the heaviest among them from 9 to 12 pounders—distributed among important towns in his dominions. In 1775 their number must have been at least doubled, that is, 128. In the wazir's artillery park at Faizabad there were, early in 1768, nine pieces of cannon of the heaviest calibre, mounted on field-carriages with screws, not inferior to those of the English in Bengal or elsewhere, and 500 artificers. According to Barker he had 22 foundries and armouries, and his main foundry at Faizabad was worked by a native of Bengal who was in charge of casting cannon. These produced six pieces of mounted ordnance per month. For the manufacture of small arms 500 artificers were employed and 150 to 200 firelocks of European type were manufactured<sup>14</sup> every month. Matchlocks as well as fire-

<sup>12</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs., 1768 (vol. I.), p. 615.

<sup>13</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 6, 1768.

<sup>14</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 17, 1768.

locks were produced at several other places besides Faizabad. "His Excellency showed me," writes Smith, "many of his own manufacture. I think them in every respect equal to those arms which the company send out to their army, except the heaviness of their stock..... Of the military stores, he is collecting a large magazine in every city or principal town, he is making shot and rockets, pikes, swords, etc., and herein he spares no labour or expense."<sup>15</sup>

### 8. Shuja's personal interest in his army.

The efficiency of his army was due, not in a small measure, to the personal interest that Shuja took in its recruitment, equipment, training and discipline. He paid his troops regularly in cash and a higher salary than the English in Bengal, a trooper in his service getting 50 to 60 rupees and a foot-soldier 10 to 12. His commanders enjoyed princely emoluments. Himmat Bahadur and Umrao Giri drew rupees four thousand each, probably per year, excluding the salaries of their troops, and other officers were similarly treated, some of them, like the Gosain chiefs and Sidi Muhammad Bashir Khan enjoying the privilege of *naubat* (state kettle-drum) *Mahi Maratib* (insignia of fish) and the use of a *pālki*.<sup>16</sup> He was very solicitous for the welfare of his troops. "The indefatigable attention," wrote Barker, "he has given to his military department and the progress he has made in his army is beyond conception....."<sup>17</sup> Richard Smith testified that "His Excellency employs his mornings in seeing his battalions exercise, and in overseeing his founders and gun-smiths with whom he usually spends two or three hours daily." The English commander-in-chief paid the nawab-wazir a deservedly high tribute, though it was not inspired by feelings of generosity, when he wrote that: "He (Shuja) is an immense projector" and that "when I consider Shujah

<sup>15</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 6, 1768.

<sup>16</sup> *Imad*, 102; SPD., XXIX. L. 280.

<sup>17</sup> Barker to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 17, 1768.

Dowlah, himself Vizier, son of a Vizier, and grandson of a man who held one of the first offices of government when the Mogul Empire was in its flourishing state, and that Shujah Dowlah bred up in all the luxury of the East, and ever much addicted to pleasures, should now so totally change his manners as to adopt this system of conduct which in time must infallibly render him truly formidable—I own I cannot but admire the man for the great progress he has already made in his new system.....”<sup>18</sup>

### 9. The Intelligence Department.

The history of Shuja's military administration cannot be complete without an account of his intelligence service. Smith who had the occasion to acquire a first-hand knowledge of the department speaks of it in these words: “The Nabob has, I believe, the best intelligence of any man in Indostan. He piques himself on this point and with justice, for he spares no money to obtain from all quarters the best and earliest information of every material event.”<sup>19</sup> The department consisting of several hundred peons; *harkārās* and newswriters functioned through a *daroghā* (superintendent) and was under the personal control and supervision of the wazir himself. Ghulam Ali, author of the *Imad-us-Saadat* estimates the total number of *harkārās* (news carriers) at 18000 which seems to be an exaggeration.<sup>20</sup> We know definitely from an absolutely contemporary and reliable Marathi letter that the wazir's monthly expenditure<sup>21</sup> on the news-service amounted to Rs. 18,000. Out of this sum two-thirds must have been consumed by the official establishment and not more than one-third could have been the salary of the *harkārās*. If we calculate the pay of each *harkārā* at rupees two and annas eight per month (which

<sup>18</sup> Smith to Ben. Sel. Com., Feb. 6, 1768.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Imad*, p. 103. *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad* (vol. II. p. 7), still further exaggerates the number as 22,000.

<sup>21</sup> SPD., XXIX. L. 280.



was the rate in Shuja's time), we have 2400 harkaras in his service. The number could not have been larger. As for news-writers and spies of various descriptions, their number in all probability could not have risen beyond a few hundred! News writers and harkaras were posted, besides in the important towns and rural areas in his own dominions, at the courts of notable Indian princes, at Delhi and Calcutta and at well-known centres in the country intervening between these places and Faizabad. Their duty was to send regular reports of all important occurrences and transactions which were considered to be of any value for the wazir. So efficiently did the department work that news from Poona reached Faizabad on the 9th day and that from Kabul on the 12th day. The news of Zabita Khan's defeat at Shakartal, which is 260 miles from Lucknow, reached the wazir just in 12 hours.<sup>22</sup> His news-reporters kept him in constant touch with Calcutta and "from thence," writes Smith, "he is early acquainted with material circumstances, not only those which are past, but often times of what is expected."<sup>23</sup> On this important branch of service which kept him informed of the doings of his people and of the neighbouring powers, and on which greatly depended the efficiency of his internal administration and foreign policy, he spent, as we know from the Maratha envoy at his court, rupees two lakhs and sixteen thousand per year.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Imad*, 103 and 107.

<sup>23</sup> *Ben. Sel. Com. Progs.*, Oct. 16, 1767.

<sup>24</sup> *SPD.*, XXIX. L. 280.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### SOCIETY AND CULTURE

#### 1. The country and its topography.

Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions constituted the central portion of the great alluvial plain—the Gangetic plain—and was one of the most fertile and populous regions in the country. The capital, Faizabad, was well-connected by roads with every part of his territory and with those of his neighbours. Of these roads two were most important, kept in good condition and frequented by troops as well as people. The one passing through Jaunpur, Benares, Mughal Sarai, Jagdishpur and Sarai Sayyid Raji connected Faizabad with Patna and Calcutta, and the other connected Faizabad with Lucknow and whence proceeding *via* Akharpur, Bangarmau and Bilgram it reached Sandi. Near Cawnpore this very road branched off in another direction and passing *via* Farrukhabad reached Delhi. The Faizabad-Lucknow road was well-kept and we have it from Champion's diary that it had "obeliskues or stones at every coss," indicating the number of miles from Faizabad.<sup>1</sup> Besides these main roads, there were many others joining most of the populous towns and a glimpse of some of them can be caught in the pages of George Forster's travels and the diaries of Champion and Macpherson.<sup>2</sup>

The wazir's metropolis (Faizabad) had eclipsed Delhi, after the anarchy of 1759-61, in prosperity and magnificence. In its origin a small country-house of mud walls and thatched roofs built by Saadat Khan and surrounded by quarters

<sup>1</sup> *Soldiering in India*, p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Forster, *A Journey etc.*, I. p. 74; *Soldiering in India*, 132, 143, 182, 183, etc.

of his chiefs and followers, Faizabad, then known as *Bangla*, had rapidly developed into a large town with gardens, markets, residential buildings and offices, and assumed its present name in the time of Safdar Jang. Its importance was temporarily overshadowed by Lucknow where Shuja with his court took up residence during the early years of his reign, but it resumed its rightful place as the first town in the provinces after the nawab's restoration in 1765. "He (Shuja) built anew, on a grander scale, the walls of Burhan-ul-mulk's citadel and raised the houses of the Mughals. He ordered some of his private retainers to build houses for themselves outside the enclosure. A vast plain extending for more than two miles, on each side of the fort was reserved and round it was dug a deep trench. In the middle of this plain all his retainers and military officers built themselves residences and out-offices as spacious as they desired." But owing to security that Faizabad afforded during an age of uncertainty and disturbance numerous families from all parts of the country and especially noble families from Delhi flocked there to make that town their permanent home and all the space, though several miles in area, was occupied within a few years. "After some years, in addition to the enclosing wall of the fort, there were two other large walls constructed by way of city defences: one enclosed on three sides a great area, two miles long by two miles broad, on the east, west and south; the other was between the fort and the outer-wall, and a mile long." The city wall was made of mud, and was 30 ft. thick and the top of the breast-work 15 ft. thick. The wall was completed before 1772, but it was not fortified.<sup>3</sup> A grand market, entitled *Chauk-Bazar*, extended from the southern gate of the fort to the *Allahabad* gate of the city and was so broad that "nearly ten bullock-carriages can run abreast it." It was entered through a handsome three-arched gateway (*tripolia*). A visitor to the palace passed through the *Chauk-Bazar*, and Macpherson who visited Faizabad in 1773 was struck by the breadth of the street, but he noted that

<sup>3</sup> *Soldiering in India*, p. 102.

the houses on either side of it were "very indifferent." The palace stood on the bank of the *Ghaghra* (also called Dewa), and Shuja's new strong mud fort and palace, which were still under construction in January 1773, had 40,000 men employed daily to complete them. The walls of this new fort were made of mud and were sixty feet thick and "so well beat that elephants made no impression with their feet."<sup>4</sup> There were three well-laid-out flower and fruit gardens within the city walls, *Anguri-bagh* inside the fort occupying one-fourth area of the enclosure, *Moti-bagh*, situated in the heart of the Chauk Bazar, and *Lal-bagh*, the largest and the most beautiful of the three, situated probably just outside the fort. There were two more gardens, *Aish-bagh* and *Buland-bagh*, on the Lucknow side of the outskirts of the city, but inside the wall.<sup>5</sup> In the suburbs, outside the walled city and probably on three sides of it, prosperous towns had sprung up, and Muhammad Faiz Bakhsh, author of the *Tarikh-i-Farah-Bakhsh*, mistook Mukhtarnagar, situated 4 miles on the west gate of the city, for Chauk Bazar of Faizabad, from the numerous shops and crowds of men. What he saw in the city bewildered him. "At last when I did enter the city", he writes, "I beheld dancing and shows everywhere, which quite bewildered me. From sunrise to sunset and from sunset to sunrise noise of the drums and kettle-drums of the regiments never ceased, and the sound of the gongs which told the hours and the watches deafened men's ears..... Well-dressed picked men, the sons of nobles of Delhi, physicians of the Greek school, singers and dancers of both sexes and of every land, were in the enjoyment of large salaries. The pockets of all, high and low, were crammed as full as they could be with gold and with silver, and no one as much as dreamt of poverty and distress."<sup>6</sup> Shuja-ud-daulah was very keen to advance the prosperity and enhance the

<sup>4</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 102-103.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad*, II. 3-6.

The present E.I.R. Station Faizabad is built on the site of Aish-bagh and Buland-bagh. See *Oudh Gazetteer* (or. ed.), Vol. I. p. 486.

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad*, Vol. II. p. 9.

beauty of his capital and had he lived for a few years more, "there would have grown up another Shahjahanabad or Delhi."<sup>7</sup>

Almost adjacent to Faizabad and on the bank of the Sarju stood the ancient and sacred city of Ayodhia, the birth place of Shri Ram Chandra, whose lofty temples, spacious houses for pilgrims and palatial residential quarters seemed to mock at the material grandeur of its newly sprung up rival. In antiquity and religious sanctity this town was next only to Benares, and was frequented all the year round by pious pilgrims from all parts of India.

Lucknow, next to Faizabad in importance, though ancient in origin and very large and populous, was a haphazard growth, except some of its parts like Chauk, and therefore it did not impress the English traveller George Forster who visited it in January 1783. "Lucknow is a large and populous city," he writes, "but wholly inelegant and irregular. The streets are narrow, uneven, and almost choked with every species of filth."<sup>8</sup> But it was Benares that owing to its antiquity and cultural pre-eminence claimed the attention of writers and travellers of Shuja's time, as it does today. As the traveller from Patna side approached the holy Kashi he had to pass along a road lined by shady trees on either side and by *pakkā* tanks at frequent intervals, the results of private Hindu philanthropy and enterprise. "The road for a considerable distance before you enter into Benares is through long avenues of lofty trees, planted there as a shade to travellers, from the inclement heat. Spacious tanks lined with stone, and descended into by stone steps, are made on the road-side, where travellers may refresh themselves by bathing or drinking water." The town itself was very large, thickly populated and wealthy and full of grand and beautiful buildings the like of which were not found either at Lucknow or Faizabad. "Many of the houses," wrote an English traveller eight years after Shuja's death, "which are remarkably high,

<sup>7</sup> *Memoirs of Delhi and Faizabad*, Vol. II. p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> George Forster, *A Journey, etc.*, II. 82.



some of them being six or seven floors, are built of stone resembling that species found in the quarries of Portland, and which abounds in this part of the country. But the streets where these lofty buildings stand are so narrow as not to admit of common carriages abreast.....The irregular and compressed manner which has been invariably adopted in forming the streets of Benares, has destroyed the effect which symmetry and arrangement would have otherwise bestowed on a city, entitled from its valuable buildings to a preference of any capital which I have seen in India." "Many of the houses are covered with red tiles," remarks another traveller, "which gives Benares more the appearance of an European city than any I have seen in India." But the elegance and beauty of this intellectual and spiritual capital of India were marred by filth thrown here and there in the streets indiscriminately and by the ruins of many a building surrounding the city which were the effects of Muslim intolerance.<sup>9</sup> Being the greatest centre of Sanskrit learning and Hindu religion and philosophy, Benares had many academies where principles of Hindu religion and sciences were taught. It was also famous for manufacture of cotton and silk cloth. Allahabad was then a small town, having partially lost its political importance after the death of Muhammad Quli Khan and completely after the departure in 1772 of Shah Alam for Delhi; but it retained, like Chunargarh, the strategic value of no mean order in the eastern part of the wazir's territory. Gorakhpur seems to have continued to flourish throughout our period, but Baliā and Azamgarh are more populous today than in Shuja's time. Mirzapur and Ghazipur have suffered greatly through the lapse of time, and so also Pratabgarh, the seat of Sombansi Rajputs, and a very flourishing town surrounded by dense forest in 1775.

<sup>9</sup> Kindersley, 106; G. Forster, *A Journey, etc.*, II. 32-33; W. Hodges, *Travels*, 61-62.

Patita, now nothing more than a village, 4 miles north of Chunargarh, was in 1782 "a large town, surrounded by a rampart, and defended by a fort." Jaunpur, though no longer "Shiraz of India," had a number of schools and was the headquarters of the district; Sultanpur was "a large town commanded by a Foujdar," Rai Bareli was equally populous and Paperghat possessed "a large mud fort." Khairabad, then one of the largest cities in Oudh, was the headquarters of the district and Sitapur, the modern headquarters, was no more than an insignificant village. Hardoi and Lakhimpur, so important in our days, were then of no consequence, while Bilgram, Gopamau, Sandilah and Shahabad, now insignificant, were large prosperous towns with flourishing academies. Shahjahanpur had obviously much larger population than now, as it was divided into four faujdarships, each independent of the others. Miranpur Katra, famous for its close proximity to the scene of the Ruhela war of 1774, was "a very large town, with some capital buildings" and with "a good *pacca* bridge" on the Bohgul *na'la* that ran south of it. Before the conquest of Ruhelkhand by Shuja Aonla was divided among the Ruhela chiefs who held their conferences there and it had "several very large mosques and a large brick fort." Bisauli, formerly the capital of Dunde Khan, was one of the most prosperous cities with stately buildings and "the palace is considered," in the words of Macpherson, "as the first piece of architecture in that country." Pilibhit and Bareli surpassed all other towns in Ruhelkhand in population, buildings and prosperity. Despite George Forster's dogmatic assertion that the ruin that overtook Ruhelkhand was due to Shuja, the countryside and towns in that province were in a flourishing condition in 1775, and the later desolation in Ruhelkhand as well as in Oudh must have been the result of Asaf-ud-daulah's misrule. Some towns were, however, in ruins even before 1775. Badaun, for example, was in decay, and Qanaul was "but a heap of ruins and not worth seeing." But Farrukhabad and Fatehgarh were well off, and so was Etawah. Most of the large villages as well as towns were protected by

mud or brick walls and strengthened by forts and there was hardly any village of some consequence which had no *sarai* with separate apartments for travellers, where food and lodging could be had for them.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. The People.

In view of the absence of records it is by no means easy to ascertain with any degree of accuracy the strength of the population in Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions. The present population of the districts over which he ruled is, according to the census of 1941, approximately a little less than four krors. From a study of the census figures of 1881 to 1941 it is clear that the average increase of population in this area per decade has not been more than 5 to 6 per cent. Assuming the average rate of increase to be the same during the entire period (1775—1941), it may be conjectured that the total population in Shuja's kingdom at his death might have been approximately a little more than one kror or so. A vast majority of the people were Hindus. The total Muhammadan population consisting both of immigrants from foreign lands and of Hindu converts of the soil must have been like a drop in the ocean. Even now after a lapse of one hundred and seventy years it does not exceed, in these provinces, fifteen per cent. The most notable and influential element, though not as numerous as some other castes, among the Hindus were the Rajputs, political and military leaders of the people, who were spread over the whole territory and divided into many clans and sub-clans. Prominent among them were the Bais and Kanhpurias in the modern districts of Unao and Rai Bareli, the Bisains and Janwars in Gonda, the Bandhalgotis in Sultanpur, the Raikwars in Barabanki, the Sombansis in Pratabgarh, the Gaurs in Lakhimpur and Sitapur, the Khichis in Kora Jahanabad and the Bundelas in

<sup>10</sup> *Soldiering in India*, pp. 101-102, 118, 127, 129, 131, 183, etc., Forster, *A Journey*, etc., Vol. II. 38, 33, 81, 82, 74; Hodges, *Travels*, 46-47, 51, 56, 61, 62, etc., *Kindersley*, 105, 241, *Hadia*, 154, 677-678.

southern Allahabad and Bundelkhand. Chauhans were found in large numbers in Etawah and Mainpuri, Chandels in Sachendi near Cawnpore and Rathors and some other insignificant clans in Ruhelkhand. Each landlord, from chiefs enjoying sway over a pargana or more down to the petty *thakur* of a village, possessed according to his means either a strong brick fort or a mud fortalice (*garhi*) situated in a village or town, surrounded by thorny jungle and almost inaccessible to the outer world. Here he lodged his family and treasure, defended by his retainers who defied the authority of the Oudh government whenever the nawab-wazir was involved in difficulties or his agents were guilty of improper behaviour or making of exorbitant demands upon the purse or honour of the feudal chief. Rajputs as a class and more particularly those of the petty zamindar variety who resided in the rural area (and it must be remembered that unlike many of their descendants of today who spend most of their time in big towns, there was hardly any absentee zamindar in the 18th century) were very intimately connected with their peasants who acted as their retainers in times of war and common danger. Besides revenue collections, judicial and executive duties were also concentrated in the hands of the zamindars who were leaders of the people. In view of such close ties the zamindar could hardly be deprived of his villages by the might of the state. The zamindar has in our days lost his position as the natural leader of his people, as medieval inter-dependence has ceased to exist, social ties have slackened and he is reduced to the status of a mere rent collector. The rank and file among the Rajputs who had no land of their own followed military profession, serving in the armies of their own chiefs, and in those of the wazir and the English in Bengal.<sup>11</sup>

The Brahmans, of whom the most numerous and influential were Kanyakubjas, while Sanadhya, Gaur and Sarjuparin were confined to a few different local areas, followed

<sup>11</sup> See *Oudh Gazetteer* (original ed.), 3 vols. *Chronicles of Unao, Chief Clans of Rai Bareilly*.

sacerdotal and literary careers. Most of them were priests, astronomers, astrologers and teachers and many made as good and active troops as the Rajputs. The famous Purbia infantry of the Bengal army was recruited mainly from these two classes, Rajputs and Kanyakubja Brahmans, from Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions. The Kayasthas came next in social importance, and almost all their twelve sub-castes were found in these provinces; but Shrivastavas and Saxenas were dominant in all parts in points of number and state employment. As their main profession was clerical and administrative service, especially in the revenue department and the secretariat, they were almost cent per cent educated and illiteracy carried reproach with them as it did with no other caste, Brahmans including. Naturally Kayasthas disputed with Brahmans the intellectual leadership of the entire Hindu community and they counted among them many scholars and poets of Sanskrit and Hindi besides Persian in which they were of all Hindu castes the most proficient. Though their numerical strength was infinitesimally small, Khattris held some of the highest positions in the revenue department and many of them were masters of Persian. But some of these topmost Khatri families, like that of the famous Diwan Atma Ram, were immigrants from the Punjab, and rank and file among the Khattris, who were children of the soil, were engaged in commerce. Barring a few such families there does not seem to have been, unlike today, any settlements of the people from other provinces in Shuja-ud-daulah's dominions except perhaps a few Maratha and Bengali families in Benares. Among the Vaishas, only a few Agarwala families were interested in the study of Persian or Sanskrit and in state employment, and a majority even of Agarwalas, as of the remaining Vaish sub-castes, were engaged in trade and industries and wielded little cultural and political influence. Kurmis and Ahirs who were found throughout the provinces, were the principal agriculturists, enjoying a greater importance in village economy than now. Pasis were soldiers as well as watchmen and were spread over the entire country. Almost every village had a blacksmith, a carpenter, barber,



and a washerman, and there was no large village without a goldsmith. Kahars, Baris and Malis were found everywhere and Chamars and Lonias formed a considerable part of the rural population in central and eastern divisions of the provinces. The Muhammadans were, in these provinces as now, essentially an urban people, and except just a handful of them who followed the professions of bakers, confectioners, menial servants and the like, a large majority of them shunned agriculture and industries, and were either soldiers or civil officers or theologians. The most numerous among them were two classes—Pathans and Shaikhs—who were mostly converted Hindus or descendants of such converts, with a sprinkling of foreign settlers and their progeny. The Pathans had their colonies at Jaunpur, Allahabad and Malihabad and in most parts of Ruhelkhand and Farrukhabad, while the Shaikhs had settled in large numbers in Lucknow, Kakori, Faizabad, Khairabad, Gopamau, Pihani and Bilgram. The bulk of the Muslim community was formed by the lower orders, such as Behnas (cotton-carders), Jolahas (weavers), Ghosis (milkmen), Bhands, barbers, etc., who were wholesale converts from the corresponding Hindu castes. As they were Sunni Musalmans, it might be presumed that the change had taken place before the establishment of the Shia dynasty in Oudh.<sup>12</sup>

The people were, generally speaking, tall, well-built and long-lived, and a careful comparison of the size and physique of the living men and women of the older generation with those of the younger confirms the popular belief that both have been gradually deteriorating for about a century. The downward trend may be due as much to deterioration in the quality of diet caused by increasing economic difficulties as to want of opportunities of bearing, handling and using arms, of military service and a career of adventure and enterprise. Whatever may be the cause, it is clear from all accounts that in the 18th century the people of these provinces were

<sup>12</sup> This section is based on District Gazetteers of U. P., and W. Crooke's *Tribes and Castes of N. W. Provinces and Oudh*, 4 vols.

possessed of greater physical stamina and Mrs. Kindersley was struck by the change in the appearance of the inhabitants as she had crossed the Karamnasa in 1767. "The men in this part of India," she wrote, "are in general *much taller and more robust* than those in the province of Bengal, and value themselves upon being better soldiers<sup>13</sup>....." The late Sir Henry Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of Oudh wrote in 1845: "—they [Hindus of Oudh] furnish the best disciplined infantry in India. Three fourths of the Bengal Native Infantry come from Oudh and recruiting parties from Bombay are sometimes seen to the east of the Ganges."<sup>14</sup> It is by no means easy to attempt with absolute certainty an ethnological analysis of the population. It is, however, evident from the physical types in our time, that Brahmans, Rajputs and Ahirs must have been taller and more robust with long faces and noses than others; but even a casual observer cannot fail to notice that some members of the lowest castes, for example, *Chamar*, possess as good features and complexion as any Brahman. There is a traditional saying in Oudh that it is unnatural for a Brahman to be dark in complexion, for a Sudra to be a fair colour, for a Muhammadan to be green-eyed and for a Rajput to be of gray complexion.<sup>15</sup> Most Khatri were fairer and more handsome than other castes, as they are today, and their ladies were distinguished for their physical charms. The other type was represented by some of the lower castes with their rather round than long skulls, medium size, and either wheat-like or light dark complexion. Some castes, like Kayasthas, Vaish and goldsmith, ranged between these two types. There might have been a strain of Dravidian blood in the veins of some of the lowest castes; but there could not have been any group of people in the 18th century with purely Dravidian features as no such group exists today. The upper class Muhammadans belonged to the first type and the generality of them to the second and except in some minor details were hardly distinguishable from

<sup>13</sup> Kindersley, L. 58, p. 249.

<sup>14</sup> *Essays on the Indian Army and Oude*, p. 285.

<sup>15</sup> *Karia Brahman, gori: Sudra, kanja Turk, bhura Rajput.*

the Hindu population in appearance and dress.

### 3. Dress, ornaments, toilet etc.

The dress of both Hindus and Muhammadans was practically the same. ".....Indeed their whole appearance is so much alike," writes a foreign contemporary visitor to Benares and Allahabad, "that it would be difficult to know the religion they are of, if Mohamædans and Hindoos, who wear garments, did not tie the strings of the jemmas (jamas), the first on the left, the other on the right." The upper classes of both the communities wore a shirt quite open at the neck and wrists (called *kurta*), a long *jama* or *angarkha*, both with long straight sleeves, coming down almost to the ground, a sash round their waist, a turban and pyjama. Brahmans usually put on dhotis instead of pyjamas and sometimes a kind of jacket called *chaubandi* instead of *kurta*; otherwise their dress was the same as that of other upper class people. The fez cap, so universal among Muhammadans of our days, was unknown to their ancestors of the 18th century whose head dress was turban. The small white cotton cap, called *palledar*, now common all over the province, had not come into existence. The dress of poor people consisted only of a dhoti and turban. The garments of high-born and well-to-do Muslim women "consist of a pair of long drawers of silk, or gold or silver stuff; a sort of gown, called jemedan, mostly of very fine muslin, worked with thread, or gold or silver; jemedan has very long straight sleeves down to wrists; and the waist so short that it scarcely reaches below the arms; the skirt is plaited very full, and hangs down upon the ground.....their long black hair is parted on the forehead, combed smooth, and hangs down behind: they generally throw a piece of shawl or a silver gauze over them, which is a sort of veil or cloak." There was practically no difference between the dress worn by Hindu and Muslim women, except what Mrs. Kindersley calls jamadan, did not have its sleeves, in the case of Hindu ladies, down to wrists, but stopped much short of elbows

and underneath it there was invariably a light bodice or *kanchli*. Nor was there any difference in the articles of clothing of the rich and the poor women except in the costliness or otherwise of the stuff.<sup>16</sup> Some poorer Muslim women seemed to have been accustomed to tight pyjamas as early as the reign of Aurangzeb (1658—1707) who had issued an order forbidding women in tight drawers to appear in public. Both Alberuni in the early years of the 11th century and Babur in those of the 16th century noted that Hindu women of their time put on saris and not skirts (*ghaghra*). When did *ghaghra* take the place of the sari is difficult to ascertain ; but the change was not universal, for some Hindu women, especially of lower strata of society, continued to wear saris and all Hindu women irrespective of caste and economic status, retained their ancient dress for some special occasions, such as for use in the kitchen and the prayer room.

Gold and silver ornaments and jewels have in all ages been favourites with Hindu ladies. Muslim ladies who were not altogether unfamiliar with them in their home-land borrowed Indian ornaments and in course of time most ornaments became common to two communities. During the 18th century jewels worn by upper class Indian ladies "are mostly superb ; their necks are ornamented with long rows of pearls mixed with rubies, emeralds, etc." They were also fond of wreaths made of jewels and jewelled ear-rings and put on rings on their fingers and toes and many of them in their noses too. "Eastern ladies", observes Mrs. Kindersley from Allahabad in September 1767, "are not strangers to arts which embellish their person ; they wash their hair and eyebrows with a leaf which makes them of a perfect black.....they stain the nails of their fingers and toes with red, and paint the palms of their hands and bottom of their feet," and they use collyrium in their eyes.<sup>17</sup>

It may be presumed from the general deterioration in the physique of men and women of the 20th century in this land

<sup>16</sup> Kindersley, L. 53 and p. 195.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, Letters 31 and 53, pp. 221—223.

and from the painting left by 18th century English travellers like Hodges, that Indian ladies in that age were more beautiful. Mrs. Kindersley who had the opportunities of seeing Indian women in the streets and markets of Patna, Benares and Allahabad, and meeting high class Muslim ladies in the harem of a gentleman, probably at Allahabad, was forced to admit, although she had the average European's dislike of their complexion, that they possessed attractive looks. "They are generally small persons," she writes, "and delicately made; crookedness is a defect unknown amongst them and it is said that their black skins have a most delicate softness." She admired the beauty of their "long cut eyes and long eyebrows which most of them have naturally" and mentioned a curious custom of sometime cutting the skin at the corners of the eyes of those who were not gifted by nature with large eyes, to increase their length and give them more room to play. ".....It must be acknowledged," she concluded, "that there is often a wantonness in the rolling of their eyes, but, exclusive of that, many of the eastern [Indian] women have so much beauty in their large black eyes, eyebrows and long black eyelashes that if they were set off by a fine red and white complexion they would be incomparable."<sup>18</sup>

#### 4. Customs, manners, diet etc.

Upper and middle class women lived in seclusion. Child marriage was the rule, and little formal education was given to girls. "The Hindoo women we can know little of, as none but the very lowest are visible; they are almost in their infancy married by the care of their parents to some of their own cast." Polygamy was permitted among the Hindus too, as it is now, but in practice it was confined to a small number of ruling families and a very vast majority of the people was monogamist.<sup>19</sup> Widow remarriage was unknown among the Hindus and *sati* was practised, but

<sup>18</sup> *Kindersley*, L. No. 53, p. 221.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p. 124; Dow, *History of Hindostan*, vol. I. p. xiii.



"this custom is not at present [1767] so frequent as formerly ; they cannot burn without permission from the Nabob of the province." Caste rules were more rigorous and Hindus of all classes had then stricter notions of the honour of their ladies than now-a-days ; and excellence of moral character, more particularly sexual, was so much prized that the absence of it was enough to stigmatise any one, however learned or wealthy, as fallen. " No people in the world have stricter notion of the honour of their women," writes Mrs. Kindersley, "particularly those of the higher casts. If any one has an improper connection, such a women has not only lost her caste, but is an indelible stain upon the honour of her family ; and in case of an elopement, it has been known that the girl has been pursued and recovered by her parents who have put her immediately to death to expiate by her blood part of the disgrace she has brought upon them"<sup>20</sup> William Hodges, another English traveller who visited the interior of the province in 1731—1783, testifies to the extremely modest conduct of the Hindu women, even of the lowest class, whom he saw working outside their homes. "The simplicity and perfectly modest character of the Hindoo women cannot but arrest the attention of a stranger. With downcast eye and equal step, they proceed along, and scarcely turn to the right or to the left to observe a foreigner as he passes, however new or singular his appearance."<sup>21</sup>

The Hindus were simple and temperate in their diet. The common people in the eastern districts lived chiefly on rice, while for those in central and western districts wheat was the staple food. We cannot take Mrs. Kindersley's statement that "their superiors have the addition of gee [ghee], milk, sweetmeats, etc.," too seriously, as till recently practically an average peasant in the province had a cow or two and milk and curd etc. must have been available to a vast majority of the rural people.

<sup>20</sup> *Kindersley, L. No. 31, p. 127.*

<sup>21</sup> *Hodges, Travels, p. 34.*

Plain temperate living, simple diet and purity of moral conduct gave the generality of Hindus good health and ensured them freedom from chronic diseases. "I believe," observes Mrs. Kindersley, "the natives are as free from disease as the people in any part of the world. They do not live to a great age; but while they live are afflicted with but few disorders." According to her, Indians possessed purity of blood (in medical not racial sense) to a greater degree than Europeans, and she noted that Indian sepoys were easily cured of such wounds which often proved fatal to Europeans.<sup>22</sup>

All over India Hindus impressed contemporary travellers as being polite and attentive in conversation, patient, temperate and frugal in their lives and friendly to foreigners. William Hodges during his journey (1781—1783) from Calcutta to Agra and Gwalior, *via* Benares, Faizabad and Lucknow, met with great consideration at the hands of the Hindus of all classes. 'The (Hindu) men are no less remarkable for their hospitality, and are constantly attentive to accommodate the traveller in his wants. During the whole of the journey in my *pallankeen* whatever I wanted, as boiling water for my tea, milk, eggs. etc., I never met with imposition or delay, but always experienced an uncommon readiness to oblige, and that accompanied with manners the most simple and accommodating.'<sup>23</sup> George Forster, another English traveller, had the same pleasant experience from Benares to Bilaspur in Ruhelkhand in the winter of 1782-83 and observed with frankness that "I should hold myself guilty of an injustice, did I not unreservedly declare that the inhabitants treated me with civility and usually with kindness."<sup>24</sup> And this treatment to foreigners was shown by our people when these parts were not under English rule. Hodges had, however, an entirely different experience of the generality of Indian Muhammadans. "In

<sup>22</sup> Kindersley, L. No. 56, pp. 236—237.

<sup>23</sup> Hodges, *Travels*, p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> George Forster's *Journey*, etc. vol. II. p. 189.

perfect opposition" (to the Hindus), he writes, "is the Mussulman character; haughty, not to say insolent, irritable and ferocious." But an upper class Muslim gentleman, he added, was "a perfect model of a well-bred gentleman."<sup>25</sup>

Hindu charity and philanthropy were too prominent features in the social life of our people in the 18th century to be missed by observant foreign travellers. More remarkable was the fact that Hindu men and women of means made no discrimination in the distribution of their charity between Hindus and non-Hindus, Indians and foreigners. "The great virtues of Hindoos," remarked Mrs. Kindersley in July, 1767, "is their extensive charity: the Brahmans inculcate with the utmost zeal the necessity of building and endowing pagodas (where themselves are maintained in ease and plenty), feeding the hungry, relieving the poor and providing against the distress of their fellow creatures, whether of their own religion or strangers."<sup>26</sup> Cleanliness was another important feature of their character. "A surprising spirit of cleanliness is to be observed among the Hindoos: the streets of their villages are commonly swept and watered, and sand is frequently strewed before the doors of their houses."<sup>27</sup> This was, however, not so in big towns like Benares and Lucknow where such strong feelings of brotherhood did not exist and where the population was more cosmopolitan, being composed of both Hindus and Muhammadans.

The drawing and audience rooms of Shuja-ud-daulah, Chait Singh and other notable personages of the time were furnished with rich carpets and cushions, and chairs and tables were extremely rarely used. A ruler or chief usually took his seat on the cushion with his officers sitting to his right and left on the carpets, and menial servants and attendants standing behind him. A visitor, whatever his rank, was required to take off his shoes

<sup>25</sup> Hodges, *Travels*, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> Kindersley, L. No. 30, p. 119.

<sup>27</sup> Hodges, *Travels*, p. 34.

before entering an audience hall, and unless he was a man of an equal or higher rank than his host, he was seated on the carpet ; in the latter case he was given a seat on the cushion (masnad) on the right or left of the host, according to the degree of his importance. English officers of the highest rank, such as governor and commander-in-chief, were allowed by Shuja to share his cushion ; but they too like others had to take off their shoes before entering the audience room. Respectable guests of high rank were received a mile or two in advance and after embracing, which was the proper form of salutation among princes or rulers, both the guest and the host rode together on the same elephant to the place appointed for the former's residence. At the time of a visit of ceremony the host advanced to the gate of his audience hall to receive a guest of an equal rank, and *itr* (scent), rose-water, betel leaves, etc., were offered and *nautch* (female dance) was very often arranged for entertainment. It was customary to exchange presents on such occasions, which were usually, with rich people, rarities, such as jewels, wearing apparels, watches, etc. Champion tells us that he made a present worth Rs. 8000 to Shuja and a similar one to Muzaffar Jang of Farrukhabad.<sup>28</sup> Europeans seeking interview with Indian noblemen had to observe Indian etiquette and to squat on the carpet, chairs being provided on rare occasions only and for the highest among them. Indian noblemen would not as a rule rise from their seats even when English visitors of the rank of an ambassador called on them. The reception ceremony of Major Brown who was deputed by the Bengal government to settle certain political matters with Mirza Shafi, a minister of the titular emperor Shah Alam, in February 1783, is described by William Hodges who accompanied the Major, in these words : "A few days after our arrival, I attended Major Brown to the durbar of the Nabob, where we found the principal commanders, amongst whom were several old

<sup>28</sup> Hodges, *Travels*, p. 116 ; *Soldiering in India*, 82, 103, 108, 145, etc.

Persian chiefs, with beards descending to their girdles, and countenances of great dignity.....After the ceremony of reception, which was by touching the turban with the right hand, without rising from their seats, we were desired to sit, for which purpose there were old-fashioned chairs brought.....*otter* and rose water were handed round, as a mark of distinction. The Nabob Mirza Suffeh sat in the centre of a semi-circle, surrounded by his chiefs, with an innumerable crowd of servants standing behind.<sup>29</sup> After remaining about half an hour we returned." Practically the same etiquettes are observed in Indian States even today ; but European guests, of whatever rank, no longer follow rules of Indian social life and are treated differently.

### 5. Amusements.

Plain in dress and diet though they were, our ancestors of the 18th century were not without amusements or extravagance. Village outdoor games, such as *kabaddi* and *kho* in which not only boys but, sometime, also grown-up men participated, indoor games like chess, *ganjifa*, *surbagghi*, etc., shows like *katputli* and *Taj-bibi ka rauza*, performances given by jugglers, acrobats, posture-masters, fire-eaters, magicians, snake-charmers, monkey-dancers, etc., and above all nautch of dancing girls, were much more frequent than can be imagined by one living in the days of talkies. The numerous religious and social fairs and festivals, and according to Mrs. Kindersley the number of Hindu religious festivals amounted to one-third of the year, furnished occasions for rejoicing and amusement. Although the Hindus lived "in this abstemious manner," she writes, "they spend vast sums of money in *tamashes* (she explains the word in a footnote to mean all kinds of shows, entertainments and processions); this they do in the marriages of their children, or in the honour of their gods ; all ranks of people have their *tamashes*, according to their different abilities ; the money spent in them

<sup>29</sup> Hodges, *Travels*, pp. 115-116.



is in lights (for they illuminate the houses in the inside), ornaments, music, dancers and perfumes." She was not much impressed by some of the shows given by jugglers, posture-masters and fire-eaters; but she could not help admitting that "these fellows are surprisingly dexterous in the postures they throw themselves into." The well-to-do ruling families, particularly of Rajputs and Musalmans, were fond of hawking, fights of beasts, wild elephants and buffaloes. Kite and pigeon flying and domesticating of birds and animals afforded pleasure to many a man. It was, however, *nautch* that was most popular and easily available amusement for all classes of people. "The girl sings, while she is dancing, some Persian or Hindustani song," writes Kindersley, "some of which are really pleasing to the ear; but are almost drowned by the accompaniments." The *nautch* girl who could explain the meaning of her song and the fine shades of emotion produced by it by delicate gestures and rhythmic movements of her body was considered an excellent dancer.<sup>30</sup>

Besides sharing with men in festivities and rejoicings, *nautch* and shows, women had their own additional amusements which consisted of songs, recitation of poems, story-telling and some indoor games. Rich ladies took delight in bathing, smoking *huqqas* and seeing their maid-servants dance and sing.<sup>31</sup>

## 6. Religious beliefs and practices.

The 18th century was a period of degeneration for Hindu religious thought and practice, when undue emphasis was laid on forms and when substance was lost in the pursuit of the shadow. Sect after sect with nominal differences in principles and practices crowded the religious stage, and excessive reverence for the guru (religious preceptor) fostered slavish habits, blind obedience to authority and degenerated into something like man-worship. Our holy places,—and there

<sup>30</sup> Kindersley, L. No. 30, Allahabad, July 1767, p. 120; L. No. 54, pp. 229—232.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, L. No. 54, pp. 224-225.

have always been too many in the province and some of the most important in the entire country—became resorts of parasite class of beggars, ignorant priests and licentious hypocrites.<sup>32</sup> Rai Chhatraman, author of *Chahar Gulshan*, gave in 1759 a graphic picture of numerous Hindu religious sects of the time, their queer beliefs and showy practices and of the ignoble life of the Hindu beggars.<sup>33</sup> The noble conception of *tapa*, which originally signified sacrifice of personal pleasures, conveniences and interests in the pursuit of a glorious end, communal or national, was interpreted to mean in the medieval age useless torture of the body, and one who resorted to this form of austerities was highly revered by the people. In the city of Benares alone a European traveller came across in 1767 many examples of *tapa* of that age. "The Brahmins practise incredible austerities in matters of no importance ; at Benares is one who is revered almost as a god for keeping a vow he had made many years since never to sit or lay down ; but to stand, with his arms extended above his head ; and it is not known he has broke through it. This is one instance amongst many others of similar kinds, and of equal use (?) to society. It would fill a volume, was I to recount a hundredth part of the variety of punishment and tortures the Brahmins condemn themselves to."<sup>34</sup> Sudras were debarred from studying the religious scriptures and although Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were not, yet in practice learning was confined to the Brahmins who contented themselves with preserving the sacred texts than making any advance over the knowledge of their ancestors. Religion became narrowed down to regulations for ceremonial purity in matters of diet and everyday life, and ceased to be a source of moral uplift for the average man. The number of fasts prescribed was so large that the conduct of business and daily mundane duties were interfered with. "The number of holidays their religion commends engross at least

<sup>32</sup> *Hadia*, p. 675.

<sup>33</sup> *Chahar Gulshan*, pp. 78b-83b.

<sup>34</sup> *Kindersley*, L. No. 29, July 1767, p. 118.

one-third part of their time : these are either feasts or fasts devoted to some or other of their gods."<sup>35</sup> Notwithstanding these defects Hindus had not altogether lost touch with the sublime truths recorded in our ancient scriptures, nor were they altogether ignorant of the meanings of the ceremonies which they performed with meticulous care, as Mrs Kindersley who did not possess training or sympathy for understanding and appreciating a foreign theology, wrongly supposed. William Hodges was struck in 1782 by the scene on the banks of rivers and tanks and in the holy shrines of numerous Hindus absorbed in religious contemplation,—a practice akin to *yoga* and must always be considered as the highest form of devotion. "It is common on the banks of the river," he writes, "to see small Hindoo temples with gauts or passages, and flights of steps to the river. In the mornings or after sunrise, the women bathe in the river.....(and go)...with vases on their heads, carrying water to the temples A sight no less novel or extraordinary, is the Brahmins at their oraisons, perfectly abstracted, for the time. to every passing object, however attractive."<sup>36</sup> However polytheistic in appearance Hindus have always believed in one supreme God and it was not difficult for an English traveller of the ability of George Forster to see it in 1782. "Hindoos believe in one God," he writes, "without beginning and without end, on Whom they bestow, descriptive of His powers, a variety of epithets."<sup>37</sup>

The age saw the degeneration of Islam as much as of Hinduism. Musalmans despised enquiry and rational thinking to a much greater degree than Hindus, and they had nothing but contempt for sciences, as Mrs. Kindersley was careful to note.<sup>38</sup> Despite their simple and definite creed they practically worshipped relics, revered tombs and adored saints and all kinds of nominally religious mendicants.

<sup>35</sup> *Kindersley*, p. 113.

<sup>36</sup> *Hodges, Travels*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>37</sup> Forster, *A Journey*, etc., vol. II, p. 34 (2nd letter, Benares, 30th September 1782).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, L. No. 47, p. 197.

Thousands of them flocked every year to Bahraich and other shrines in Oudh with costly offerings for the tomb of Salar Masud and to invoke the deceased soldier's spirit for the fulfilment of their worldly objects.<sup>39</sup>

A close student of this period of Indian history, who has lived in the enlightened 20th century, is struck by communal amity and good-will and absence of religious frenzy, communal riots and questions like music before mosques and the Muslim right to cow-slaughter that have caused considerable worry and baffled solution in our age. During the long period from the appointment of Saadat Khan to Oudh in 1722 to the death of Shuja-ud-daulah in 1775 there is on record only one incident of religious bigotry which disturbed harmony in Benares. But happily the trouble remained confined to that town and was nipped in the bud. There is no record of any other communal tension, and none at all of disturbance of peace on that account. It may be that the communal peace might have been partly due to the fact that Muhammadans were a ruling community and Hindus in general were indifferent pacifists. But that cannot be an adequate explanation, for we know that though pacifists Hindus were not inclined to put up with religious persecution and that there was no slaughter of cows in Benares and other sacred towns. Had the Muslims so desired they could have easily established their right of cow-slaughter in Benares. Referring to the fact that the ruler of Benares was a Hindu raja (a vassal of Shuja) whose religion enjoined peace with men and animals, Mrs. Kindersley wrote in 1767: "Peace reigns in their (Hindu) territories; *even animal blood is not shed*."<sup>40</sup> Obviously there must have been an earnest desire on the part of both the communities to live together in peace and amity.

<sup>39</sup> *Hadia*, p. 653.

<sup>40</sup> *Kindersley*, L. No. 27, Allahabad, June 1767, p. 105.

## 7. Industries and trade : economic condition of the people.

Agriculture was the most important industry, providing work and means of livelihood, in some form or other, to more than eighty per cent of the population. During the 18th century every piece of arable land had not been brought under cultivation as it is to-day, and extensive belts of forests and barren land existed in many districts, especially in Gorakhpur, Gonda, Bahraich and modern Lakhimpur. But the yield *per capita* seems to have been much higher than now. Oudh, Allahabad and Ruhelkhand have been rich in agricultural wealth since the dawn of recorded history, and their equable climate, copious rainfall and fertility of soil have combined to produce a variety of rich crops. Besides wheat, rice, gram, oats, pulses (such as urd, arhar and moong), oil seeds and other corn, more valuable crops like cotton, opium and sugar-cane were grown in most parts of the provinces. Fruits like musk-melons, water-melons, cucumber, mangoes, guavas, black-berries, yellow-berries and vegetable of numerous kinds were found, as now, in almost every village, and in certain parts, such as the neighbourhood of Jalesar and Jaunpur, extensive cultivation of sweet-scented flowers like rose, *bela*, jasmine, etc., was undertaken for extracting oil from them. Indigo, finer than that now found in Bihar, was cultivated in some parts, especially in the vicinity of Agra, Bayana and Khurja<sup>41</sup>; but it has now altogether ceased to be produced. Sugar-cane cultivation in Etawah, Kora Jahanabad (Fatehpur) and Allahabad districts has considerably declined since the end of the 18th century during which they were noted for good sugar and *gur* industries. In the first half of the 18th century and no doubt throughout the time of Shuja-ud-daulah extremely fine rice "matchless for whiteness, delicacy, fragrance and wholesomeness" was produced in the region extending from Qanauij in the west to Gorakhpur in the east and from the

<sup>41</sup> R. K. Mukerji, *vide* U. P. H. S. Journal, Vol. XIV. Part II. p. 46.



Himalayas in the north to Siddhaur (in Barabanki district) in the south.<sup>42</sup> Contemporary evidence establishes it beyond doubt that Shuja's territory was in the enjoyment of great agricultural prosperity, much better cultivated than any other parts of the country. Colonel Thomas Deane Pearce writes in 1772 in a private letter to general Pattison :—".....his (Shuja's) country abounded with plenty when we were in the utmost distress (1769-1770); and on his shores were well-cultivated villages, when thousands starved at Buxar.....In that country (Oudh) there is hardly a square mile uncultivated, and it everywhere swarms with inhabitants. In ours cottages are hardly to be found—whole villages are deserted—the country is waste."<sup>43</sup> The fall in cultivation<sup>44</sup> in Oudh occurred under Asaf-ud-daulah and his successors.

Cotton and silk industries were next in importance and their output, besides supplying adequately the needs of the local population and some neighbouring parts of the country, was exported to European countries, such as England and France, as well as to Japan, Malaya and other regions in East Asia. In matters of specialised production and organization for supplying to foreign merchants and for transport to frontier posts or seaports Indian industries had reached a higher stage of development during the Mughal period than those of contemporary Europe, and despite the break-up of the empire the general industrial efficiency had continued practically unimpaired during the period under review (1722-1775). In every town and in almost every big flourishing village there lived cotton carders and weavers who produced large quantities of handloom cotton fabric, and in some places silk also, throughout the year. But the most notable centres of cloth manufacture in the 17th and 18th centuries which supplied handloom fabrics to England, France, Holland and

<sup>42</sup> U. P. H. J. vol. XIV. Part I, p. 46.

<sup>43</sup> British Indian Military Repository, vol I. p. 20; Burke's Speeches, vol. I. p. 416-17.

<sup>44</sup> *Hodges*, pp. 106-7, 110, 113, 148, etc.; *George Forster*, vol. II. pp. 81, 85-6, 97-8, 113, 193; Burke, I. p. 417.

some other European countries and to East Africa and East Asia were Khairabad (in modern Sitapur), Daryabad (in Barabanki) Akbarpur and Jalalpur (in Faizabad), Nayagaon (in Hardoi) and Benares, and the cloths from these centres were designated by European merchants as Kerriabads, Derriabads, Echbarrys, Gelalepores, Mereoolles and Amertees.<sup>45</sup> Contemporary European travellers and merchants, such as Maurique, John Kenn and others, testify that in the 17th century Benares possessed 7,000 looms for weaving very fine cotton cloths alone, which worked throughout the year. But its pre-eminence in the industrial world was due to silk manufacture. White muslin, *kimkhab* (a silk cloth variegated with gold, silver and various coloured silk threads), turbans with gold and silver borders and gold and silver embroideries were specialties of this town and commanded a ready market in Persia, Central Asia and Turkey where these finished articles were used in great numbers. It is no matter for surprise that every European visitor was struck by the wealth and prosperity of Benares from its abundant merchandise in cotton and silk manufactures and in other goods.<sup>46</sup> These industries had continued in a flourishing state in the 18th century, as is clear from the account left by Mrs. Kindersley who noted in 1767 that besides priests who were numerous, "the rest of the people (in Benares) were mostly manufacturers, such as weavers etc." "At Benares," she wrote in another letter, "is a great manufactory of gold and silver silks and gauzes; they are very costly . . . . .". Other important towns in the provinces had similar manufactories, besides numerous families of weavers who worked on their own account, and the industry everywhere absorbed a considerable portion of the population. We have it on the testimony of the traveller quoted above that in the 18th century

<sup>45</sup> English Factories, 1651-64, p. 9, Peter Mundy, *Travels in Asia*, II. 154-156; *Hadia*, 154, Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, vol. I. p. 379.

<sup>46</sup> *Maurique*, vol. II p. 147; Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, vol. I. p. 379.

"weaving is the employment of the greatest number of the people throughout India." She thought it proper to record that "it is but just to give some account of that patience and neatness by which some of their manufactories are brought to such perfection that Europe can boast of nothing to equal them. The most curious of which are Muslins and Filligrane." She had the highest praise for Dacca muslins, calicoes and filligrane, and Benares manufacture came next. According to her "the exquisite fineness of some of the muslins is inconceivable. About filligrane she writes that "this is a work which requires great delicacy and patience ; it is not perforated like the filligrane made in Europe but the gold or silver is cut into long pieces like fine threads, and folded together with such extraordinary neatness that it is impossible upon the most curious examination to discover by what means it is joined. It is extremely light, but still vastly expensive, for the labour costs about ten times as much as the material." 47

Besides manufactures from the above-mentioned towns, Oudh calico and mercolies (a kind of coarse cloth used as a wrapper quilt) produced in many an insignificant place found warm welcome in European markets. Chintz, gazi and broad cloth for tents and screens were manufactured at Shahbazpur in Allahabad, and Mirzapur was a prominent mart of silk and woollen cloths. Carpets and bed sheets were produced in western Oudh. Dyeing, printing and embroidery and needle-work, the natural accompaniments of handloom productions were found in almost every town. Several towns in Ruhelkhand, notable among them being Farrukhabad, Bareilly and Najibabad, were flourishing centres of cotton industry. A variety of cotton and silk products, finished and complete, was from these provinces transported by land to Surat and Calcutta and thence shipped to Persia, East Asia and Europe. Another route for transport was via Delhi, Lahore and Kabul to Central Asia ; but owing to inroads of the Sikhs in the second half of the 18th century it

47 Kindersley, L. No. 27, p. 105 ; L. No. 57, pp. 239-244.

had to be diverted from its former channel and took its course through Najibabad, Lal Dang and the mountainous region to Kashmir and thence to Persia and Central Asia. The English traveller George Forster, while at Lal Dang in February 1783, "learnt that about one hundred mules, laden with raw silk, cotton and ordinary calicoes, for the Jumbo [Jummu] market, had already moved to the outskirts of the town." The proprietors of the cargo were, he adds, chiefly residents of Benares, Lucknow and Farrukhabad; they had appointed agents to follow the caravan. A large number of such caravan frequented between Oudh and Kashmir every year.<sup>48</sup> This was at a time when Shuja had been eight years dead and the misrule of his son, the draining of Oudh wealth to Bengal, the accumulations by private Englishmen and the oppression that followed in the wake of the company's trade in Oudh, had greatly reduced the output of cotton and silk manufactures and hampered their export to foreign lands which George Forster was careful enough to take note of in his famous Journal.<sup>49</sup>

Some of the other notable industries were saltpetre, manufacture of arms and ammunition, especially swords of various kinds, some with jewelled handles and others ordinary, spears, daggers, bows, arrows, shields, sheaths and muskets, manufacture of gold and silver ornaments and vessels such as trays, plates, dishes, betel-cases, rose-water holders, flower-holders, ink boxes, spoons, etc., brass, copper and other metal works, artistic pottery, carpentry and *bidri* and enamel work. Saltpetre and mica were monopolies of the State and contract for their collection was given to individual natives or foreign merchants by the wazir himself. Weapon manufacturing industry must have supported several thousand families, as every man fit to bear arms carried them without any restrictions, disarming of the population having been effected by the British after 1857. Boat building was another important industry that must have provided work for several hundred men, for besides being used in large

<sup>48</sup> George Forster, *A Journey, etc.* II, 191-195.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* II, pp. 86-87.

number for travelling and transport of merchandise by water, they were utilized in building temporary bridges for armies to cross rivers. A considerable number of boats were permanently employed by Safdar Jang's military transport department<sup>50</sup> and as early as 1763 Shuja-ud-daulah had more than a hundred boats in his establishment and 525 boatmen in his service.<sup>51</sup> It is highly probable that boats that plied in Oudh waters were in shape and workmanship like those of Bengal which were described by an English traveller who sailed from Calcutta to Benares in W. Hastings' company in 1782. He says that boats used by the people for the travelling were called *bajrās*, which were of various sizes, were both sailed and rowed and had from 12 to 20 oars. Some of them were "about sixty feet in length, having very high sterns ; many of them twelve feet from water's edge, and quite sharp at the upper point ; in the centre they are broad, having a considerable bearing in the water..." There was generally one mast in the centre with a square sail and a topmast with a square sail for fine weather. The boats were "extremely commodious, having in the centre a small verander [verandah], or open portico, opening by a door into a handsome room, lighted by a range of windows on each side. This is the dining or sitting room, within which is a convenient bed chamber, generally containing a small closet, the height of the sitting room is usually from seven to nine feet." A nobleman or a high officer had, besides a boat of the above design, two small boats, while travelling, one for accommodating his kitchen, called *Palwah*, and the other for conveying him on board the boat or on shore and known as *paunchway*.<sup>52</sup> Hodges mentions boats of several other types of which one was known as *moarpankhi* (or of the shape of a peacock), usually more than a hundred feet long and not more than eight feet broad, and steered by forty sailors who were directed

<sup>50</sup> Srivastava, *First two Nawabs of Oudh*, p. 255.

<sup>51</sup> Ben. Sel. Com. Progs, Vol. of 1768, p. 616.

<sup>52</sup> Hodges, *Travels*, p. 39.



by a man "who stands up and sometimes makes use of a branch of a plant to direct their motion. In one part of the stern is a canopy supported by pillars, in which are seated the owner and his friends, who partake together of the refreshing breezes of the evening. These boats are very expensive, owing to the beautiful decorations of painted and gilt ornaments, which are highly varnished and exhibit a very considerable degree of taste." Hodges mentions a few improvements made by the English in Bengal, such as broad flat floor, square sterns and broad bows.<sup>53</sup>

Scents, perfumed essence and fragrant oil were special favourites with upper classes and were prepared at many a place in the provinces. Ghazipur and Jalesar were the chief centres for the manufacture of rose-scent and rose-water, and Jaunpur, which even now holds the field in spite of the market being flooded with foreign products, was noted for perfumed essence and fragrant oil, chiefly *bela* oil.<sup>54</sup> Qanaui was renowned throughout the country. Amroha in Ruhelkhand was noted for its artistic pottery. Earthen vessels after being beautifully polished were artistically variegated with silver and coloured designs. A clay *huqqa* (hubble-bubble) with *chilam* and cover and its accessories cost from one gold *ashrafi* to two or three. Similarly a clay glass for drinking water, or a dish, artistically designed and painted would cost one to three gold coins.<sup>55</sup> There were similar other local industries in various towns and villages which it will be tedious to recount. Of the great commercial marts Mirzapur, Benares, Faizabad, Lucknow and Farrukhabad were most notable. Woollen and silk cloth such as blankets, shawls, *alwāns*, etc., and other commodities from Kashmir, Nainital, Kamaun, Lhasa and Bengal were in great demand at Mirzapur which swarmed with merchants who imported various articles from the neighbouring provinces and foreign lands and exported those manufactured in the locality. Bahraich was famous for the products from the hilly regions such as honey, wax, musk-pod, ginger, tumeric,

<sup>53</sup> Hodges, *Travels*, p. 40.

<sup>54</sup> *Hadia*, pp. 677-678.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, p. 138.

vinegar, gold ornaments pomegranates, guavas, chillies, etc., and hunting birds, like falcons and hawks and numerous other things. Gorakhpur abounded in plenty and there was hardly anything of everyday use that could not be got there.<sup>56</sup>

It is pleasing to mention that the balance of trade had remained in India's favour throughout the Mughal period as during the earlier ages of her history, and huge amounts of coined and uncoined wealth from foreign lands used to be absorbed in this country. Shuja-ud-daulah inherited from the past the policy of not allowing gold, silver and precious metals to go out of his dominions except in payment of subsidies to the English troops whose aid he had sought in furtherance of his aggressive scheme. He rightly believed that English trade in his territory would drain the wealth of his country and unfavourably affect the interests of native traders, besides causing a rupture between him and the Bengal government, and that was why he did not agree to allow the company's agents to open up trade with Oudh, despite great pressure from the successive English governors from Clive to W. Hastings. In his last interview with the wazir in September 1773, Hastings promised that no Englishman would reside in his dominions and that Shuja would have the power to decide all disputes with their *gumashtas*, and yet the nawab refused to agree to have free trade with the English, as "he seemed confirmed," to use Hastings' words, "in the opinion that the current specie of his country would be drained by a free trade with ours" [the English possessions], and the governor "found it impossible to overcome his objections." So Hastings entered into an agreement with Chait Singh of Benares, whose position did not permit him to object to the scheme, to the effect "that articles of broad cloth, copper and lead brought at the company's sale should pass duty free through his territories to Mirzapore and that on all other goods he should collect on equal rate of duties from all merchants, European or native or others

<sup>56</sup> *Hadia*, 152-153 and 668-679.

indiscriminately.<sup>57</sup> Shuja-ud-daulah's wisdom and firmness thus saved all his dominions, except Benares, from those adverse economic consequences which were the concomitants of free trade with the English company and from which Bengal, Bihar and Madras were suffering since the foreign domination over them. But the nawab permitted such individual Englishmen as were recommended by the governor or other high officers to trade in Oudh subject to the laws of the land and enjoy some petty advantages provided these advantages did not interfere with his tariff system and did not subject his people to any serious discrimination.<sup>58</sup>

The upper class, consisting of big landlords and high officials, formed a fringe of the population and was wealthy and extravagant. The balance of trade being in the country's favour and the export of every kind of specie being positively forbidden, wealth tended to accumulate and was mostly in the possession of the nobility. The members of this class, especially courtiers, ministers and district officers as well as powerful barons, lived in comfort and enjoyed most luxuries of the time, spending large sums over them. Every person of consequence kept his treasure in jewels or gold coins to be able to carry them in his day of misfortune, and employed a train of attendants and menial servants at nominal salary. The servants compensated themselves by impositions on those who were in any way dependent on their master's favour, extorting petty presents and obliging merchants to under-sell their things to them. Polygamy was common among this class, of course more among Muslims than Hindus; but topmost Hindu taluqdars also married more than one wife.<sup>59</sup> Extravagance was more pronounced a

<sup>57</sup> Ben. Sel. Com., Progs, 4th October, 1773.

<sup>58</sup> Many instances of the English asking for some favour or advantage may be seen in the pages of Calendar of Persian Correspondence, vols. II-IV., of which one may be given here: on January 3, 1772 Cartier requested Shuja to allow an Englishman named Archdeacon "to coin two or three lakhs of rupees at Benares (mint), unless this should occasion the addressee any loss." "This will strengthen our friendship," added the English governor, "and please the said gentleman." (Vide C.P.C., III. L. No. 1013).

<sup>59</sup> *Hadia*, 672.

feature of the Muslim than Hindu nobility, and so also prostitution was more common among the former than among the latter. Dancing girls and women of ill-fame were so prosperous that most of them had two or three tents each. At the time of Shuja-ud-daulah's march their tents went ahead of his, and they had 10 to 12 armed retainers each. "Hence cavalry and infantry used openly to pursue the same course (love of prostitution) as their master, without fear of check."<sup>60</sup> When troops with scanty income could misbehave in this manner, the condition of the wealthy official class could better be imagined than described. Dances and *nautch*, shows and entertainments, were frequent and in some cases daily routine in the life of the leisured aristocrats. An idea of the standard of diet, taste and expenditure of the taluqdars of that age can be formed from the account of an ordinary feast given sometime about 1739 to an ordinary officer, not above the rank of a captain in the army of the governor of Allahabad by Rani Sujan Kunwari, wife of Rajah Chatradhari Singh of Pratabgarh, on behalf of her husband who was absent at Allahabad. "Having reached the fort," writes Murtaza Hussain Khan Bilgrami who was the guest referred to, "we dismounted and entered into it. We saw an extensive courtyard on the three sides of which stood the palace with lofty double-storeyed buildings, the walls of which were made of massive stones. The courtyard as well as the large rooms were furnished with carpets and were further covered with white sheets. The Rani who sat on the roof of the palace which was lit by lamps, was overlooking us from behind the stone-lattice. Thirty to forty iron lamps were suspended from the branches of the trees on all sides of the courtyard, and there were rows of lamps placed on two sides of the floor. I advanced to the courtyard and took my seat on the *masnad*, while 500 of my men sat in rows on the carpet. Ram-mast Singh and the Rajah's other trustworthy servants, Hindus and Muslims, now came to serve us, and spread before us white sheets of cloth to

<sup>60</sup> *Memoirs of Delhi and Fatahabad*, Vol. II. p. 10.

place dishes on. Menial servants brought four sets of *āftabās* and *chilamchis* (a jug for holding water and a basin for washing hands in), one set of which was made of silver, for washing our hands. Soon after big enamelled plates, some of which were made of silver, containing a large variety of food, such as roasted meat, mutton curry, *pulao*, both sweet and saltish, various kinds of sweetmeats and vegetables, loaves of *shirmal*, of *Baqar-khani* and Indian dishes like *puri* and *kachauri*, each *puri* weighing one pakka seer, *dahi-bara*, several other sweet preparations, sauces soaked in vinegar of *pudina*, etc., were brought and placed before us. The writer's brethren (followers) enquired of the manner of (obtaining) the flesh of fowls and animals. The Rajah's men replied, 'The Maharajah has four separate cooks and kitchens for Muhammadans (guests), and care is taken to see that the meat provided to them is of animals slaughtered after Muslim style.' In short, after we had finished our meal.....we were conducted to a bigger and neater hall and seated there, and our servants were entertained in the room vacated by us. At this new place trays full of betel leaves and tobacco with their accompaniments, such as betel-nut, *elāichi*, *laung*, etc., were brought and placed before us. When our servants had taken their food, we desired to take leave for our encampment. Now, once again, a silver betel-case full of well-prepared betel-leaves and a perfume-stand containing four phials with different kind of *itr* were brought and these together with silver *āftabā* and *chilamchī* and all the silver utensils in which food had been served for me, one thousand rupees in cash and a purse containing one hundred and one gold coins, and two horses, one of which was of Turkish breed and white colour with black spots and the other of Tazi breed and of triangular joints, each valued between five and six hundred rupees approximately, were presented to me. I was also asked to instruct my servants to take for my use the carpet, the white sheet spread over it and the *masnad* etc., on which I had been seated when dinner was served."<sup>61</sup> A

<sup>61</sup> *Hadīq*, 673.



Muhammadan is, from the economic point of view, accustomed to a higher standard of living and is more extravagant than a Hindu of the same income and social status and it should not occasion any surprise to the modern reader that in the 18th century *zardah*, *pulao*, *shrimal* etc., besides meat, were daily common dishes of a Muslim noble or a high officer. An English traveller who visited Faizabad in 1782 fancied himself as transformed into "an Indian Nabob" when he received "a number of dishes of various (meat) curries and pillaus" (*pulao*) together with compliments from the widow of Shuja-ud-daulah.<sup>62</sup> Fruits were commonly used by the middle class people as well as by the upper class.<sup>63</sup> Shuja made a present of fruits from foreign lands to Kalyan Singh, and Beni Bahadur placed a variety of delicious fruits before the nawab-wazir when he paid a visit to him. Many an impoverished noble family, such as those of late Qamr-ud-din Khan, ex-wazir, Muhammad Ishaq Khan and Qasim Ali Khan, depending upon the assignments of villages in the nawab-wazir's dominions, passed their days in indolence and inactivity. Similar refugee families from Delhi lived at Farrukhabad on the charity provided by Ahmad Khan Bangash, the late ruler of that State. Taluqdars, however, could not afford to be lazy in that age, as much of the administration of their respective areas was concentrated in their hands and they had to be vigilant against their neighbours as well as against the nawab.

The wealthy merchants and bulk of the official world formed what may be called the middle class, though there was no such class in the European sense of the term. Industries and commerce were in the hands of the Hindus, Musalmans not having taken to them, as we know from the letters of Mrs. Kindersley, and they were clever business men indeed. They were wealthy, but plain and thrifty, hoarding their savings and spending a part of them on extensive charity, on religious ceremonies and marriages, etc., of their children. Mrs. Kindersley, from the tales she heard from

<sup>62</sup> *Hodges*, 104-105.

<sup>63</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 82.

English merchants, who were prejudiced against their more thrifty and successful Hindu rivals, paints a highly overdrawn picture of their avarice, effeminacy and dishonesty in their dealings, which is not only not borne out by contemporary Indian writers but is actually contradicted by the accounts of William Hodges and George Forster. At any rate Hindus of that age were quite successful as business men. "They are more perfect and more successful," confirms Mrs. Kindersley herself, "in their favourite occupation of trade than the Moor-men (Muhammadans) in theirs of war<sup>64</sup>..." Menial trade was, however, followed by "the people of both religions, though particularly by Hindoos."<sup>65</sup> Clerks and troops were fairly well off. "The pay of soldiers in Hindostan is very great," observed Alexander Dow in 1768, "being 60 to 200 rupees per month to every single trooper."<sup>66</sup> A foot-soldier's salary was 10 to 12 rupees a month, while a cavalryman, who was usually required to bring his own horse, was paid rupees fifty to sixty per month and a jamadar or an officer of a similar rank had 200 or more, according to his rank. But the common people were poor, earning not more 2 to 3 rupees monthly. Weavers, for example, who manufactured costly calicoes, Muslin and embroidered cloth did not earn "*more than three or four rupees a month.*"<sup>67</sup> The monthly wages of peons, coolies and other ordinary unskilled labourers were approximately rupees two and annas three in the urban areas and one rupee and fourteen annas in the rural districts. In Calcutta, where grains and other necessities were a bit dearer than in Oudh. the company's agents paid the coolies and workers of the lowest grade in 1767 at the rate of Rs. 2-12- per head for month.<sup>68</sup> Women labourers were paid much less. The rates of payment remained practically unchanged for a long time, as is clear from Buchanan's report which says that in the early years

<sup>64</sup> Kindersley, L. No. 47, Allahabad, August, 1767.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Dow, *History of Hindostan*, Vol. I. p. XIX. <sup>67</sup> Kindersley, L. No. 57.

<sup>68</sup> Long: *Selections from Unpublished Records of Govt.*, 1748-1767, Vol. I. pp. 30 and 483; also Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, 410.

of the 19th century men servants' monthly wages in Gorakhpur were from 2 to 3 rupees, while those of women servants ranged between eight to ten annas.<sup>69</sup> The mass of the people were thus poor and in want of some of the necessities of life. "As to the common people," observes Mrs. Kindersley, "I cannot speak of them without pain; or ever pass through the bazars of Patna, or any other place, without drawing comparison between the poor of this country and those of England: these are poor indeed; scarce any covering, their food rice and water; their miserable huts of straw; in the cold season they have a fire made with a little straw in the middle of their huts, which smothers them with smoke, their minds, except what Nature gave them, no more informed than the beasts' which perish: no liberty, no property, subject to the tyranny of every superior. But what seems to complete their misery is, that whether pinched by cold or enervated by heat, indolence equally prevails, to such a degree as seems to absorb every faculty; even immediate self-preservation scarcely rouses them from it."<sup>70</sup> While the above description is substantially correct, it will not be either safe or honest to assert that the mass of the people in the 18th century were poorer than they are to-day. As a matter of fact the contrary view is established by the contemporary evidence in our possession. The purchasing value of the rupee was several times higher in Shuja's time than in ours—say in the third decade of the 20th century—and grain, milk, ghee, oil and other commodities of everyday use were extremely cheap. An idea of extraordinary cheapness can be formed by the following schedule of prices current during the year 1764 A.D., a year of scarcity, as is incidentally recorded in the pages of Sayyid Muhammad Bilgrami's *Tabsirat-ul-Nazirin*, a very reliable and accurate contemporary work.

Wheat	1 maund 10 seers a rupee.
Barley	2 maunds a rupee.

<sup>69</sup> Martin : *Eastern India* Vol. I. p. 309.

<sup>70</sup> Kindersley, L. No. 48, Allahabad, August, 1767.

Urd	1 maund 20 seers a rupee.
Moong	1 maund 10 seers a rupee.
Brown Rice	1 maund a rupee.
Gram	1 maund a rupee.
White rice	30 seers a rupee.
Ghee	3 seers a rupee.
Mustard oil	10 seers a rupee.
Kodaun (a kind of maiz)	3 maunds and 20 seers a rupee.
Raw sugar	30 seers a rupee.
Sugar	7 seers a rupee.

The historian expressly mentions that the reason why he recorded the above prices was that the year was one of scarcity and things were consequently "very dear,"<sup>71</sup> meaning that in normal times things were much cheaper. Cloth, the next great human necessity after food, was then also cheaper, as it was cheaply manufactured in the country, practically in every village and town and out of cotton produced in the land and spun into thread by village people themselves, as we know from accounts left by European travellers, and confirmed by tradition that still lingers in many parts of Oudh. There was then no foreign competition, as India generally imported only woollen cloth and exported cotton cloth to foreign land. No doubt during the 19th century and in our times there has been some rise in wages along with rise in prices,<sup>72</sup> but the former has not kept pace with the latter. A worker in Shuja-ud-daulah's time could easily feed himself on rupee one, but one cannot do so to-day on three to four rupees. Dr. Radhakamal Mookerji is right when he says that "in the 19th century agricultural wages rose, but the real wages were reduced appreciably."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>71</sup> For the schedule and the historian's remark see *Nazirin*, p. 667.

<sup>72</sup> During 1858-1868 the average daily wages in U. P. were between 1½ to 2 annas, during 1878-1900, two to three annas, and during 1914-1919 four to six annas. There has been a decrease in wages since 1934 and between that year and 1941 the average wages are three annas per labourer per day. *The Economic History of India* by R. K. Mookerji, *vide* U. P. H. S.J. Vol. XIV. p. 67). The rise in 1942 and 1943 is due to war, that is, to unnatural causes.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*



## 8 —Literature and Art

## Persian.

Notwithstanding the fact that the period under review did not produce a single first-rate genius in literature, science or art, there was no dearth of scholars, poets and writers of an average capacity and in some cases of some eminence, and intellectual activity in certain spheres was indeed vigorous. During the early years of this period a fundamental literary change occurred in the history of Indian Musalmans as a result of which they could no longer retain Persian as their mother-tongue whose place was now taken by Urdu. Yet Persian continued to occupy the place of pride, was the court language and was preferred as a medium of polite intercourse and of instruction in Muslim academies, in some of which both Hindus and Muhammadans had their schooling. Saadat Khan and Safdar Jang were not only enlightened patrons of Persian scholars and poets but had themselves composed poems in that language. Shuja-ud-daulah does not seem to have inherited poetic talent from his ancestors; but he loved poetry and there were some Persian and Urdu scholars at his court. Sultan Ali Safawi, author of *Maadan-us-Saadat*, mentions the names of three prominent scholars of Persian,<sup>74</sup> among whom the first place belonged to Sayyid Sari-ud-din, son of Ashraf Mahmud of Faizabad, renowned for his deep and wide learning. Next in importance was Mulla Ataullah who was considered to be without equal in India for his knowledge of theology; and the third was no other person than Maulvi Majid, a reputed teacher of Rudauli in Barabanki, where he held a school which was attended by a large number of pupils. He spent his later years in the service of Shuja's mother. One of the wazir's physicians named Hakim Sadiq Muhammad and entitled Mualij Khan, was, besides being highly skilled in his profession, an erudite scholar of Traditions (*hadis*) and theology (*fiqah*).<sup>75</sup> But the literary productions in this

<sup>74</sup> *Maadan*, Vol. IV. pp. 263b-264a.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*



language, whether poetry or prose, fell much short of the standard attained during the age of Akbar and they are inferior, as works of art, to those of the second half of the 17th century. *Chahar-Gulzar-i-Shujai* of Harcharan Das, the only work of sober history written under the patronage of Shuja-ud-daulah and dedicated to him, forms a class apart, and, though unfinished at his death, constitutes an abiding monument of his reign, if not of his patronage to learning. Harcharan Das was the master of an easy and flowing style in Persian and his book must for ever remain an indispensable authority for the history of the period. He was in the service of Bibi Khanam, wife of Qasim Ali Khan and daughter of Ishaq Khan Najm-ud-daulah, and lived at Faizabad from 1755 to his death. He was in the enjoyment of a monthly allowance of rupees forty from Shuja's treasury, which was temporarily stopped by Beni Bahadur and restored only after the latter's dismissal in 1767. The author referring to the stoppage of the allowance vents his spleen on Beni Bahadur in these words:

آن نا بهادر دینی بریده غریب کشی زر از قنخواه نداده

Another great chronicler, though, unlike Harcharan Das, not connected with the wazir's court, came from Bilgram in the Hardoi district in Oudh. Sayyid Muhammad Bilgrami's *Tabsirat-ul-Nazirin*, written with the pious desire of commemorating the deeds of his co-religionists of the town of his birth and residence, incidentally describes many useful occurrences and details of the history of the country from 1100 A.H. to 1182 A.H. with an impartiality and accuracy which are rare in other contemporary works. It is written in plain and yet graceful Persian and is interspersed with many verses some of which are of real literary value. There is yet a third historian who appropriately belongs to this period, though his work, *Kārzār-i-Sadā-shiva Bhau wa Shah Ahmad Abdali*, was composed and published in 1780 A.D., five years after Shuja-ud-daulah's death. A Maratha Brahman by birth and upbringing, Kashi Raj, had spent most of his life in the service of

Safdar Jang and Shuja-ud-daulah, and was a distinguished diplomat and writer and master of Persian in which language he wrote a lucid and polished style, rich in vocabulary and, idiom alike. From the historical point of view this work occupies the first place among the chronicles on the fateful third battle of Panipat. Besides the above notable scholars there were many lesser lights at Lucknow, Jaunpur, Rudauli, Bilgram, Gopamau, Sandila, Farrukhabad, Aonla, Badaun, and Bareilly which were well-known seats of Arabic and Persian learning. Scholars and theologians in these and many other places were formerly supported by subsistence allowances and grants of land from the wazir's government; but since Shuja. resumed jagirs and stopped allowances in 1768, the masters were left to the device of making their living by imposing fees upon their pupils.<sup>76</sup> The measure must have adversely affected the spread of education and learning in the provinces.

#### Urdu.

The reign of Shuja-ud-daulah coincided with the most brilliant epoch in the history of Urdu poetry. The origin of Urdu is traced back to the thirteenth century when the necessity of a common medium of intercourse between the foreign Muslim settlers and the indigenous Hindu population gave birth to a dialect having the same grammatical structure as Hindi but slightly differing from it in vocabulary owing to preponderance in it of foreign Persian and Arabic words, which became common in the vicinity of Delhi, the capital of the newly sprung up Muslim state. The celebrated Indian poet of Persian, Amir Khusrau (1253—1325 A.D.) was the first writer to make use of this dialect in some of his poems. But his lead was not taken by any scholar in northern India for centuries and Urdu continued to be a despised spoken dialect till in the 16th and 17th centuries some of the enlightened Sultans of Bijapur and Golkanda and then a few Muslim poets of the Deccan under their royal patronage adopted it as the medium of expression of their poetic compositions. Their poems aroused interest in

<sup>76</sup> *Soldiering in India*, 131.

Delhi and in the first half of the 18th century Delhi poets like Hātim, Ābrū, Ārzū and others, inspired by the example of the Deccan pioneers, laid the foundation of the earlier Delhi school of Urdu poetry. Sauda, Mir Dard, Mir Ḥasan and Mir belonged to the next and Shuja-ud-daulah's generation when Urdu had developed to the status of a written language and Urdu poems reached a high water-mark of excellence. The compositions of this age and more particularly of Sauda and Mir commended themselves as models of Urdu poetry and to the posterity as classics to be treasured and imitated.

Anxious to make his court a real seat of culture Shuja-ud-daulah extended a courteous invitation to Mirza Muhammad Rafi Sauda of Delhi, reputed to be the most eminent Urdu poet of the age, and sent him a sum of money for the expenses of his journey. But the contented poet, declining the invitation, sent the following verse in reply:—

سودا پیچے دنیا تو بہر سو کب تک آوارہ ازیں کوچہ بآں کو کب تک  
حاصل یہی ام سے نہ کہ دنیا ہووے بالفرض ہوا یوں یہی تو پھر تو کب تک

An adverse turn of fortune, however, obliged the poet, some years later, to bid farewell to the city of his birth and heart and seek the patronage of Ahmad Khan Bangash of Farrukhabad after whose death in April, 1771, he came to Faizabad and became the chief poet at Shuja's court. He continued to enjoy the nawab's patronage till the latter's death in January 1775. Shuja's successor Asaf-ud-daulah, more profuse in his bounty to poets and scholars than his father, nominated Sauda as his poet-laureate which position he held till his death at Lucknow in 1781.

During his long poetic career of about forty years Sauda tried almost every form of Urdu poetry besides *ghazals* and odes in Persian, but his permanent fame rests on panegyrics and satires which he made his own and in which he has not been equalled, much less surpassed, by any Urdu poet before or after him. His collection of *qasidas*, known as Sauda's *diwan*, consisting of panegyrics on the notables of Delhi and

Oudh, is probably the best work of its kind and so also his twenty-four *masnavis* of satires and lampoons, which bristle with sparkling wit and entertaining stories. His services to the Urdu language are equally great. Sometimes he wrote prose also, and imported words and constructions from Persian in prose and verse alike without ignoring the Indian literary traditions, allusions and mythology,—a practice unhappily abandoned by later Urdu writers and poets. Critics agree in maintaining that "Sauda is undoubtedly one of the greatest of Urdu poets and shares with Ghālib, Mir and Anis the highest place in Urdu literature."<sup>77</sup>

Another notable Urdu poet at Shuja's court was Mian Hasrat<sup>78</sup> who was an apothecary by profession and an excellent versifier. His original name was Mian Jafar Ali Hasrat, but he is known to us as Hasan Dehlawi. Like Sauda he quitted Delhi which was experiencing confusion and poverty consequent on the decline of the Mughal empire, and made Faizabad his home, where he was granted a small pension by Shuja-ud-daulah. After the wazir's death he became a favourite of his successor. A third poet, more celebrated than Hasan, who spent some time at Shuja's court and enjoyed his patronage, was Ashraf Ali Khan bearing the *nom de plume* of Fighān. Fighān's Urdu poems are charming for the purity of language, eloquence and fluency, for their freedom from low and debased sentiments, and for happy combination of Urdu and Persian idioms.<sup>79</sup>

Apart from the above poets, there were some others at Faizabad and Lucknow who were not directly connected with Shuja-ud-daulah, but without doubt shared his patronage through Salar Jang, the wazir's brother-in-law, who was a liberal patron of poets and scholars. One of these was Siraj-ud-din Ali Khan, surnamed Ārzu and also sometimes called Khan Sahib. He was a distinguished scholar and poet of Persian, and composed poems in Urdu also. After Nadir's

<sup>77</sup> *A History of Urdu Literature* by R. B. Saxena, p. 67.

<sup>78</sup> *Maadan*, Vol. IV. p. 269a.

<sup>79</sup> Saxena, *A History, etc.*, p. 52.

invasion and massacre in 1739, he migrated to Lucknow on the advice of Salar Jang, where he spent the rest of his life dying there in 1756. He is remembered chiefly for his Urdu dictionary, *Gharaib-ul-lughat* and for *Nawadir-ul-farz*, a biography of Indian poets who wrote in Persian and Urdu.<sup>80</sup> Mir Ghulam Hasan, better known by his *nom de plume* of Hasan or Mir Hāsan, was another famous Delhi poet who sought shelter at Faizabad and was employed by Salar Jang. He shifted to Lucknow along with the Oudh court and died there in 1781. Like Sauda, he was a prolific writer and poet both in Urdu and Persian and tried practically every species of Urdu poetry. But he excelled in *masnavi* and his *Sihrl-ul-bayan* "is considered to be one of the finest and best productions in Urdu."<sup>81</sup>

### Sanskrit.

Sanskrit learning was in a state of decline during the 18th century, principally for lack of patronage and also because Hindi was gradually displacing it in Hindu literary circles. Since the decline of the Mughal empire there were no Sanskrit poets at the court of Delhi, and Shuja-ud-daulah's court too was not adorned by any scholar in that language. But thanks to the presence of some Hindu rajahs of taste and to the fact that it is the sacred language of all Hindus, Sanskrit learning was kept alive, though it became stereotyped and stagnant. Benares was even then the principal seat of Sanskrit learning in the country and the home of some notable scholars a few of whom were patronised by Maharajah Balwant Singh and his successors. Sukh Lal Misra of sacred Kashi was famous for his vast learning and among several works of which he was the author, two, namely, *Alankar-Manjari* and *Shringar-Mala* were considered important. Nagoji Bhatta, grandson of the celebrated Bhattoji Dikshit, author of the classical *Sidhant Laghu Kaumudi*, was one of the greatest Sanskritists of his day. He lived at

<sup>80</sup> Saxena, *A History etc.*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p. 68.



Penares and was attached to the court of Ram Singh of Shringaverpur. Shankara Dikshit (probably of Benares) was a court poet of Sabha Singh of Bundelkhand and died in 1730 A.D. He wrote a drama entitled *Pradumna Vijaya* and also *Gangavatar Campu* and *Shankaracetovitasa*, a compu on the life of Rajah Chait Singh of Benares. Bhimsen of Qanauj was a great grammarian. His chief work is a commentary on *Sudhasagara*, besides which he wrote several other works. He had three brothers all of whom were writers and poets in Sanskrit. Another scholar whose name figures very important was Visveshwara of Almora who resided at Anupshahr on the Ganges. "His writings are many and cover poetry, drama, poetics and dialectics." His *Rukmini-paridaya* is a *natak*, *Nava-malika* is a *natika*, *Shringar-manjari* is *satak* and *Mandar-manjari* "is a romance in prose." "His *Aryna-saptasati* is really a work of erotics of considerable poetic thought," according to a modern critic. He wrote many other independent works and some commentaries also. There was another *Viseshwara* who too belonged to Almora. He was the son of Lakshmi Dhar Pande. "He was a literary genius" and began writing at the age of ten. He died at the young age of thirty four. He had several Sanskrit works to his credit, and in poetics especially his writings were various.<sup>82</sup>

There must have been quite a good number of Sanskrit knowing men, for each flourishing village had a *pandit*, a priest and astronomer combined into one, and every good town must have had more than one. Besides, Sanskrit schools were usually attached to all notable shrines. Therefore there could have been no dearth of lesser Sanskrit scholars who, of course, did not produce anything original or second-rate.

### Hindi.

Hindi, though far older and more developed than Urdu, was like the latter confined, for purposes of literary expression,

<sup>82</sup> *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature* by M. Krishnamaachariar, Madras (1937), pp. 355-56, 516-17, 753, 759, 777 and 786.

to poetry during the period under treatment. After the classical age of Sur Das and Tulsi Das whose works do not bear any appreciable trace of the influence of Persian poetry or of Muslim religion and culture on Hindu life and thought, Hindi poetry had taken a downward trend in the matters of selection of themes and purity of ideas and diction and in the employment of imagery and allusions. In the 18th century it entered upon that phase in its evolution, which concerned itself primarily with the enunciation of rules of prosody and poetics and their application in poetic constructions, and the epoch is fittingly called the *rīti-kāl* or the age of forms in Hindi literature. Throughout the century love was the most prominent theme and though devotional and heroic songs were not altogether ruled out, they did not appeal to a vast majority of writers who seem to have been directly or indirectly influenced by Muslim life and thought and whose poetic fancy was employed in the analysis and description of various moods and postures, feelings and sentiments of an imaginary beloved suffering from pangs of love for her separated lover, and in similar other allied themes. Hindi poetry of this period is, therefore, more conventional and profane than that of the 16th century and the poets of this epoch took great pains in perfecting the form in respect of metre and beautifying the language of their compositions to the neglect of niceties of emotion and thought.<sup>83</sup>

Shuja-ud daulah was not interested in Hindi poetry, and when the chronicler of his son's court spoke of his patronage of Hindi poets he meant by that expression Urdu poets, such as Sauda and Mir Hasrat. In aristocratic Muslim circles Urdu continued to be referred by the name of Hindi or zaban-i-Hindavi even in the early years of the 19th century. Nor is there any record to show that any of the wazir's courtiers encouraged Hindi scholars. Yet the literary productions of this age in Hindi are immense. There were scores of Hindi poets in all parts of Oudh and Allahabad and

<sup>83</sup> See Ramchandra Shukla, *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas*.

some in Ruhelkhand also who flourished under the patronage of numerous Hindu taluqdars and zamindars, and there were still others who wrote independently for self-expression or for the sake of service to the language.

Among the Hindi poets of the 18th century two, namely, Bihari and Das, stand out prominent by almost the universal consent of critics, and share between them the glory of being the foremost exponents of this school (*riti kāl*) of Hindi poetry. But we are not concerned with Bihari, as in point of time he flourished a little before the period under review. Nor is he decidedly superior to Das whose style is marked by directness and spontaneity; while that of Bihari is laboured, artificial and gorgeous. Born at the village of Tuenga near Pratabgarh, Bhikhari Das was a Kayastha of Shrivastava sub-caste and flourished during the first half of the 18th century. He is the author of nine poetical works of which *Kāvya-Nirnaya*, *Ras Saransa*, and *Shringār-Nirnaya* are the most well-known and valuable. His *Shringār Nirnaya* is the unique work of its kind. Das lived at the court of his patron Hindupati, brother of Prathipati of Pratabgarh. As an exponent of Hindi prosody and poetics he easily occupies the first place and as a poet his compositions are marked by lucidity and eloquence of style, clear critical diction and perfect mastery over the language. His works reveal his intimate knowledge of Sanskrit prosody and literature. Tosh-nidhi, another notable poet, belonged to Sighaur in the Allahabad district and was the author of an excellent work entitled *Sudhanidhi*, in addition to *Vinaya-satak* and *Nakha-shikha* which have been recently discovered. Maharajah Balwant Singh of Benares was a liberal patron of Hindi poets and at his court there were among others Raghunath, Gokulnath, Gopinath and Mani Ram, all the four of Bandijan caste and blood relations and poets of high order. They continued to enjoy the patronage of Balwant's successors and besides producing several independent poetic works of merit, they jointly undertook the translation of the Mahabharata and Harivansha Purna into Hindi verse

which contain about 2,000 pages and constitute the biggest story books in Hindi. One of Gokulnath's works is *Chait Chandrika*, named after Balwant's successor Chait Singh, which, though primarily a book of rhetoric, has some historical value, as it gives the genealogy of the ruling house of Benares. In fact Benares was a great cultural centre and there lived and worked many Sanskrit and Hindi scholars and poets besides those given above, such as Harinath, Ganjan and others. The rulers of Amethi, like those of Benares, were men of literary taste. Rajah Himmat Singh was the patron of the famous poet Udainath alias Kavindra who was the author of three works of which *Ras chandrika* is particularly notable. Himmat Singh's successor Guru Dutta Singh was himself a good poet with *Bhupati* as his *nom de plume* and author of a *Sat-sai* and two other small works. His personal bravery in cutting through the lines of Saadat Khan's superior army is celebrated in one of the poems of his court poet Kavindra. Kavindra's son was a promising young poet during the lifetime of his father, and subsequently became author of some poetic works. Shambhu Nath Misra, famous for *Ras-kalaula* (रस कलौल), *Ras-tarangini*, and *Alankār-dīpaka* was a protégé of Bhagwant Singh Khichar of Asother in Kora Jahanabad, whom he survived for many years, and Rishinath of Asani, father of the more famous poet Thakur, was patronised by Sadanand and Raghunath Kayastha, cultured officers of the Benares court. Barisal was another poet from Asni and Dutta from a village near Cawnpore and court poet of Khuman Singh of Charkhari. Ratna, another luminary of high order, was in the service of Rajah Fateh-sāl of Shrinagar (Garhwal) for whom he composed a panegyric and named it *Fateh-bhushan*. Thān Kavī was a resident of Daundiakhhera in Rai Bareilly district and court poet of Dalel Singh of Banswara whom he has eulogised in his well-known book *Dalel Prakash*. Brijbasi Das of Brindaban occupies a unique place and his *Brij Vilas*, a voluminous work dealing with various episodes of Lord Krishna's life and written after the style of Tulsi Das's *Ram*

*Charitramanasa*, has been deservedly popular throughout the provinces since its publication in 1770 A.D. He also rendered the well-known Sanskrit drama *Prabodh Chaniro-daya* into Hindi verse. To this class belong the works of Nagridas and Sabal Singh Chauhan. The former was the *nom de plume* of Maharaja Sawant Singh of Kishangarh who turned a recluse, lived at Brindaban for many years and composed many devotional songs, while the latter, probably a resident of Etawah district, is famous for rendering the Mahabharata into Hindi verse in 18 volumes. The name of Chhatra Singh Shrivastava of Ater has come down to us for his *Vinaya-muktawali* which contains some bright poems. Pt. Ram Chandra Shukla gives a high place to Ghan-anada, a very scholarly Kayastha from Delhi, who renounced the world and lived as a recluse at Brindaban, among the *bhakti* poets of the age. Guman Misra was a court poet of Raja Ali Akbar Khan of Pihani under whose patronage he translated Harsha's *Naishadhi Kavya* into Hindi verse, which brought him fame. In the introduction of this work the poet has contributed some poems in praise of Ali Akbar Khan. Apart from this, he wrote two independent works, but they do not seem to be of much value. Girdhar Kavirai of Bandijan caste was another popular versifier whose poems, called *Kundaliyas* and dealing with matter-of-fact things of everyday life and experience, though not of much poetic importance, are quoted even now by indifferently educated and illiterate village folk in Oudh and Hindi knowing people in other provinces in the country. Besides these there were many other lesser poets and scores of obscure versifiers, too numerous to be mentioned in a work like this.

Ruhelkhand was not backward. Qanauj was the home of Mani Ram Misra whose fame rests on two scholarly works, namely, *Anand-Mangal* and *Chhind-chhappan*, of which the former is a translation in Hindi verse of the tenth chapter of *Bhagwat Purana*. Another poet, Deokinandan, was a resident of Makrandpur, a village near Qanauj, and author of four poetic works. Of these two are of historical



interest, as they were named after his patrons, Sarfraz Giri, a Gosain hermit and Awadhut Singh, a well-to-do landlord in Hardoi district, whose virtues are eulogised therein. Chandan, another equally well-known poet, was born at the village of Nahil Puwayan in Shahjahanpur district, and composed thirteen small books some of which are of more than average poetic value. He was a scholar of Persian too and has left a collection of his poems known as *Diwan-Sandal*, Sandal being his pen name.

Of the Muhammadan poets of this age writing in Hindi the names of two are worthy of mention. The first is Ali Muhib Khan of Agra whose *nom de plume* was the Sanskrit word *Pritam* and who has immortalised himself in his work of humour, entitled *Khatmal Bāisi*, which consists of twenty-two poems on bug. According to a competent critic (Ram Chandra Shukla) *Pritam* deserves a place among first-rate Hindi poets and he is a pioneer in the field of humorous verse. The second name is that of Sayyid Ghulam Nabi of Bilgram whose poetic name was the Hindi expression *Ras-lin* (रसलीन). He is the author of the well-known and popular work named *Anga-Darpan* which is considered by critics to be a work of sufficient merit. Another work of his is *Ras-Prabodh*, which, however, does not occupy the same place in Hindi literature as *Anga-Darpan*.<sup>84</sup>

The literature of this age, Hindi and Urdu, though varied and abundant and a part of it imbued with lofty sentiments of love and devotion, reflects, when it is viewed as a whole, a slight degeneration in ideas and taste, and makes it abundantly clear that the political decline of the people had been accompanied by the intellectual deterioration of the upper and middle classes. The best poets of this period could not take rank by the side of the great masters of the 16th

<sup>84</sup> This section is based on *Misra Bandhu Vinod* and Ram Chandra Shukla's *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas* as well as the author's independent study of many of the works of the poets in the original. For smaller poets whose names could not be given in these pages, see R. C. Shukla's *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas* (1999 V. S. edition), pp. 269-437.

century. Their works do not infuse into the readers a new philosophy of life, lofty patriotism or an optimistic interpretation of moral truths. Nor do they impress one as works of art of the highest order.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### CONCLUSION

No period in our medieval history, (the one following the breakdown of the Tughluq kingdom excepting), is marked by such an utter disregard of national interests by our rulers as the twenty years during which Shuja-ud-daulah lived and worked. The central government had been paralysed owing to a long process of natural deterioration in the character of the later Mughal emperors and also owing to a short-sighted policy pursued by selfish and unpatriotic ministers, giving rise to independent provincial dynasties with narrow interests and outlook. The energy and attention of the self-appointed ministers at Delhi were so completely absorbed in their mutual quarrels for the acquisition or retention of control over the titular emperor and the territory that still remained under his rule that they had neither time nor desire to keep themselves in touch with even momentous happenings in the remote parts of the country. Nor did they have enough of patriotism and statesmanship in them to take at times long view of things or indulge in an occasional thought for the national interests of the country as a whole. In such an atmosphere of confusion and sleepiness it became easily possible for a handful of foreign merchant adventurers to subvert the lawfully constituted authority in the distant and neglected province of Bengal and acquire the power of making and unmaking 'nawabs,' unnoticed by and without interference from the faction-ridden, impotent central government and the indifferent rulers of the neighbouring provinces till the adventurers had so thoroughly consolidated their gains as to have become a menace to these very sleepy neighbouring states. The history of the period, when studied in this light, has a lesson for every patriotic Indian and particularly for our communal and national leaders.

Since the reign of Emperor Ahmad Shah (1748-1754) it had become increasingly clear every day that the Delhi court could neither maintain internal peace and order nor protect its frontiers from foreign invaders without Maratha co operation and assistance. The nobly born and aristocratic Imad-ul-mulk, a grandson of the founder of the Hyderabad State, had won the civil war against Safdar Jang and attained wazirship with Maratha aid, and as he realised the impossibility of functioning as the first minister of the empire without Maratha backing, he entered into a close alliance with them. The upstart Ruhela retainer Najib-ud-daulah, once an obscure and poverty-stricken trooper, who had risen to importance through the good offices of Imad-ul-mulk, aspired to the position held by his patron and in conformity with the traditional policy of his race allied himself with the foreign invader Ahmad Shah Abdali of Kabul to realise his life's ambition. The contest between the parties, the one backed by the indigenous Hindu Marathas and the other by the foreign Muslim Afghans with whom Najib claimed kinship, assumed a frightful aspect even before 1757 when the Ruhela chief was appointed by the invader as his supreme agent at Delhi, culminating within four years in the fatal battle of Panipat. Actuated as it was by selfish, sectional and sordid motives, this struggle produced threefold results, all in the anti-national direction, besides fouling the atmosphere and demoralising politics all over the country. In the first place it gave the English merchants in Bengal an ample opportunity to seize political power and consolidate their position in the three eastern provinces with impunity, an opportunity which they exploited to the fullest extent. The well-informed Clive started on 16th October 1756 for the recovery of Calcutta, just thirteen days after the occupation of Lahore (4th October) by the Abdali's vanguard, which had completely unnerved the imbecile government of Delhi and diverted the attention of the disturbed provincial rulers. The fall of Calcutta (2nd January, 1757), the treaty with Siraj-ud-daulah, nawab of Bengal (9th February) and the

humiliation of the French of Chandarnagar (23rd March) took place, while the invader was inflicting a terrible blow over Delhi and the neighbouring areas and the nervous ruler of Bengal dared not provoke any internal dissension against his government owing to the uncertainty of his own position in view of the critical times through which north-western parts of the country were passing. It is significant that Clive and his colleagues, who were fully in touch with these developments through their spies and news-writers, hurried through the conspiracy against Siraj and the farce of Plassey (23rd June) not only before Delhi could recover from the devastating shock but even while one branch of the invader's army under Jang Baz Khan was still in the Doab engaged in a conflict with Shuja-ud-daulah, the nearest and most formidable neighbour of the English. Clive's successor Vansittart engineered another capital revolution by deposing Mir Jafar and giving the *gadi* of Bengal to Mir Qasim on 27th September 1760 when the Abdali's biggest invasion of India was in progress and events were heading towards the decisive engagement at Panipat. The coincidence of the above-mentioned events in Bengal, with the Abdali's invasions of north-western India and consequent distraction of the central government was not due to chance. It was brought about deliberately by the English policy of turning India's difficulties to their own advantage. In the second place the contest, as it ended in favour of the foreign party, dashed to the ground the hope, as it turned out for centuries, of the establishment of a truly indigenous central government composed both of Hindus and Musalmans and strong enough to keep the whole country unified and contented. Such a government could have been established only with Maratha co-operation, for the Mughal ruling family and the Mughal aristocracy had degenerated beyond redemption, and the Ruhelas were double-dyed traitors to the country and the Mughal dynasty alike, aiming at nothing short of the foreign Afghan rule or their own sovereignty established with foreign assistance. The Marathas, on the other hand,



however selfish and extortionate in character, did not aim at the displacement of the Mughal dynasty. Their main object was to be the power behind the Mughal throne and to exercise that power through the Muslim wazir, Mir Bakhshi and other chief officers appointed with their consent. This is abundantly clear from the history of their ascendancy at Delhi during 1752-1760 and from their subsequent dominance under Mahadji Sindhia in 1789. Nana Sahib revived the experiment of his forefathers during the great Indian rebellion of 1857 when he re-enthroned the deposed Mughal monarch Bahadur Shah, contenting himself with the position of his chief agent. In the third place, the culminating phase of the struggle crushed at Panipat the Maratha power in the north and thus removed the only formidable obstacle in the path of the English expansion westward, leaving the nascent British power in Bengal free to pursue schemes of enslaving the rest of India. Thus did the third battle of Panipat sow the seed of India's slavery, not under the Afghans, as Najib and his partisans had hoped, but under a western people from beyond the seas.

Though Najib primarily must be held responsible for this national catastrophe, Imad and the Marathas must also share the blame with him inasmuch as the selfish and pusillanimous wazir took no proper steps for the destruction of the traitors at home when he was in a position to do so and to organise a united national resistance against the invader, and the latter because of their selfishness and greed for plunder, which made them almost universally hated in northern India. Nor can Shuja escape the idiom of having actively helped the forces of reaction against those of nationalism. More generous in sentiments and possessed of greater love for the land of his birth, with which he had three generations' hereditary connection, than either Imad or Najib, Shuja in actual practice never really placed the country's interests above his own. The policy pursued by him no doubt served his immediate interests, but in the long run it proved to be short-sighted and anti-national. His intrigues against Imad

with whom he had hereditary feud, and his desire to bring about a balance between Najib and the Marathas were unexceptionable according to the standard of the age. But his intervention in the third battle of Panipat proved disastrous for his interests as well as those of his community and country. Little did he know that within four years of the Panipat episode he would be enslaved by the power whose hands he was unconsciously strengthening by his conduct during 1760-1761. He would have suffered the fate that he did a little later even though he had not provoked the British by his open support of Mir Qasim's cause, for despite repeated disavowal by the authorities in England the company's policy was assuredly one of expansion. Such was at least the determined policy of the 'men on the spot' and many an Englishman at this period advised his government to conquer the whole of India for the benefit of the British race.\* Other Muslim rulers fell one after another and the turn of the Hindus came only next, the Marathas of them being the last to lose their independence. And this was what should have been ; for of all the people the Marathas were the most patriotic and enterprising. Muslim rulers of that period knew little of patriotism or even loyalty to the Mughal throne, for, as Sir Jadunath Sarkar rightly remarks, India was not their *patria*. The Rajputs were loyal to the Mughal ruling family, but their patriotism was circumscribed to their own land, that is, Rajasthan. Not only the Maratha leaders but even the rank and file among them felt poignantly about the fate of Bengal as well as of the Punjab at the hands of the foreigners, as is clear from the numerous contemporary Marathi letters on the subject. And the English in this country, who feared the Marathas most, paid them, of course unconsciously, the highest compliment for their patriotism by pursuing a relentless opposition to them and by consistently endeavouring to incite all north Indian powers to form a league against them.

\* Alexander Dow, *History, etc.*, Appendix II. pp. 94-96.

It is noteworthy that our political decline during this period was not accompanied by the same measure of economic dislocation or disruption or by intellectual and moral degradation. There is no denying the fact that the revenues of the empire had been immeasurably reduced owing to shrinkage of its territory, and trade and commerce had been greatly hampered due to lack of the same security and safety of roads as had once been the rule. Yet the country was prosperous and as was testified by contemporary European travellers, industries and trade were in a flourishing condition. If our economic condition became responsible for the loss of our independence, it was because our natural wealth and prosperity tempted the foreigners to acquire a political hold over the country so as to exploit it more conveniently and effectively. There was similarly some intellectual and moral deterioration; but it was slight, and only affected a fringe of our population, namely the upper class, notably Muslim, while a vast majority of teeming millions had remained free from its mischievous influence. The Indian intellect was as active and virile as ever; but it was not expressing itself in politics and military exploits. The absorbing interest of our poets and thinkers was either love poetry or religious composition in both of which some sort of debasing influence was perceptible. The neglect of military science and establishment, which did not keep pace with the new developments in Europe, may therefore be set down as the only other main cause of the beginning of the era of our enslavement, the first being the political decline of the central government. Both these can be traced to the single prime factor, namely, absence of unselfish, patriotic and far-sighted leadership. The heart of the masses was undoubtedly sound, and the fall was due to self-seeking and unpatriotic ruling class.\*

The curious reader may be interested in the enquiry as to why Shuja-ud-daulah who was an independent prince at the time of the treaty of Allahabad and at least nominally an

\*Dow, *History, etc.*, Appendix to Vol. II. p. 95.

equal ally of the company sank gradually into a secondary position and why his immediate successor definitely became a subordinate ally of that mercantile organisation within a few months of his father's death. For such a change partly the policy of the nawab-wazir's new allies the English and partly his own conduct were responsible. The subtle English diplomacy had made it appear to the entire Indian world that Shuja's restoration was an act of British generosity and not one of policy and necessity that it really was, and the wazir therefore stood as a suppliant before the company's chief agent to whom he continued showing habitual deference, accepting for himself a slightly inferior position at least on social occasions. This social precedence was cleverly but gradually turned into political superiority. Moreover, the English consistently followed the policy of gradual but steady encroachment upon the sovereign rights of their Indian allies by putting upon their treaties with them such interpretations as were likely to attain the desired result, and forcing these interpretations upon their allies in the form of fresh treaties. The treaty of 1768 which reduced Shuja's military strength was based upon such an interpretation of that of 1765, and the treaty of 1775 which reduced Asaf-ud-daulah to the status of a subordinate ally was based on the unwarranted English assumption that all the treaty engagements with his father were personal and not binding on the company after his death. And above all, the unquestioned English military superiority always tended to exert an unwholesome influence upon the freedom of the Indian prince, not only by its normal presence but also by the threat of its employment to impart effective sanction to their diplomacy, as was actually done to secure Shuja's consent to the unreasonable treaty of 1768. Moreover, contrary to the treaty of 1765, the English continued to have their garrisons at Chunar and Allahabad, the two most important forts and strategic places in the wazir's dominions, which had the effect of forcing the English superiority upon Shuja, besides securing other important military and political results.

Shuja-ud-daulah's own ambition became no less a cause of his political suicide. His absorbing passion of acquiring full control over Shah Alam's affairs as his *de facto* wazir and the emperor's aversion for such a proposal led him to appeal to the English governor for assistance, and this together with charges and counter-charges, rejoinders and their replies that followed in quick succession and lasted for more than a year raised Vereist to the position of an arbiter and a judge *vis-a-vis* the emperor and his wazir and reduced Shuja to that of a mere petitioner, begging English aid for the settlement of a domestic dispute. Then his aggressive schemes against his neighbours, especially Ruhelas, could not materialise without active military assistance from the English. This foolish desire drove him to commit the second capital mistake of his life, namely, begging for a loan of British troops from time to time, which in the long run produced disastrous results. The presence of a foreign army, though friendly and in his pay, at his capital had a demoralising effect on his power both from military and political point of view. In course of time it became a rival institution to the nawab's own forces and furnished the occasion for the appointment of an English political resident at Faizabad. Shuja could not regularly pay the salary of these English troops and at his death he was under a huge debt to the company. His sins were visited upon his son and successor Asaf-ud-daulah who was made to part with an extensive and fertile tract of his dominions, namely, the State of Benares, in return for a conditional English guarantee to allow him to enjoy the rest of his paternal inheritance, and was obliged to sign a fresh treaty soon after his accession which reduced him to the status of a subordinate ally to the company.



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- (7) *Trans. Per. Ls. Issd.*,—*Translation of Persian Letters Issued*, 1765-1775.
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- (1) *Modave's Journal du Voyage du Bengale a Delhy* (Paris MS.). Comte de Modave travelled from Chandranagar to Delhi, via Faizabad, Lucknow and Agra in 1774, and stayed in India till his death in 1777. A highly educated man, Modave has left behind in this journal valuable information "on the topography and the economic and military condition of the Mughal Empire, the state of administration, the characters of the different races and leading personages, religion, manners, and the policy of the English and French." His observations on Shuja's character, etc., are invaluable.

VII. *French (published)*

- (1) *Memoire Sur l' Empire Mogal*—of Jean Law. Ed. by Martineau. (1913. Very useful.
- (2) *Gentil—Memoires Sur l' Indostan* of M. Gentil (Pub. 1822). As the author was in Shuja's service for many years and had the privilege of personal friendship with him, his account of his many transactions, policy and character is invaluable.
- (3) *Madec—La Nabob Rene Madec*: By Eamile Barbe (1894). Useful.
- (4) *Memoire of M. Madec*, parts I and II. (Bib. Nat. Nouvelles. Acquisitions, francois. I. 368). Autobiography of Madec. He was in Shuja's service, and though his work is very meagre as compared with Gentil's it is nevertheless important.

## B.—SECONDARY

I. *Persian (unpublished).*

- (1) *Tarikh-i-Muhtasim* (O. P. L. Bankipore MS.) by Muhammad Muhtasim, a grandson of Hafiz Rahmat. Written in 1837 A.D. and based on *Imad-us-Saadat*, it does not possess any independent value of its own.
- (2) *Gul-i-Rahmat* (O. P. L. Bankipore MS.) by Saadat Yar Khan, a grandson of Hafiz Rahmat. Composed in 1248 A.H., it is an amplified edition of *Gulistan-i-Rahmat*, with all the defects of the latter. Is not of much use.
- (3) *Tarikh-i-Farrukhabad* (R. A. S. B. MS.) by Muhammad Waliullah. Written at the request of Col. Baillie of Lucknow, it is primarily a history of the Bangash rulers of Farrukhabad. Is also useful for Shuja.
- (4) *Tarikh-i-Sawanikat-i-Salatin-i-Oudh* (R. A. S. B. MS.) of Kamal-ud-Din Haider of Lucknow. Written in 1847 A.D., it is a history of Oudh, is based on *Imad* and at places has independent value.
- (5) *Sultan-ul-Hikayat* (Rampur State library MS.) of Lalji, son of Shital Prashad. Written in 1853, it is a history of Oudh. It has two editions, the amplified one is full of details and is useful. The abridged edition is preserved in the Library of His Highness the Maharajah of Benares.
- (6) *Majmu-e tavarikh-i-Bedar* (my own MS. procured from a Kayastha family of Lucknow) by Sanath Singh, pen-name Bedār. Written in 1200 A.H. the work gives chronograms of various notable events. It is very useful for Shuja's reign.

II. *Persian (Published).*

- (1) *Bostan-i-Oudh* (Per. text, lithographed at Lucknow, 1892) by Rajah Durga Prasad of Sandilah. Is based on Imad and is useful for the reign of Wajid Ali Shah.

III. *English (published).*

- (1) *An Historical Relation of the Origin, Progress and Final Dissolution of the Govt. of the Rohilla Afghan in the N. W. Provinces of Hindostan.* By Charles Hamilton, in E. I. Company's service. Pub. 1787 A.D., London.
- (2) *The History of the Reign of Shah Aulum.* By W. Francklin, 1798. Third ed. 1934. P. Office, Allahabad.
- (3) *Life of Robert, Lord Clive, Baron of Plassey.* By Charles Caraccioli. 4 vols. (London 1775).
- (4) *History of India, as told by its own Historians*, vol. VIII. By H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson.

IV. *Hindi (published).*

- (1) *Himmat Bahadur Birdawali*: By Padmakar ed. by Bhagwan Din, Nagri Pracharini Sabha, Benares. Throws light on some of the activities of Himmat Bahadur Gosain.

## C.—MODERN WORKS

I. *English.*

- (1) *An Historical Account of the Bengal Native Infantry, 1757-1796.* By Captain John Williams. London, 1817.
- (2) *Life of Robert, First Lord Clive.* By G. R. Gleig (London: John Murray, 1848).
- (3) *Life of Robert, First Lord Clive.* By Sir John Malcolm. (London, 1836). 3 vols.
- (4) *Life of Lord Clive.* By Sir G. W. Forrest. 2 vols. (1918).
- (5) *Clive of Plassey.* By A. Mervyn Davies.
- (6) *Innes—History of the Bengal European Regiment.* By P. R. Innes. (London, 1885).
- (7) *The Chronicles of Onnao.* By Alfred Elliot. Allahabad, 1852.
- (8) *A Report on the Family History of the Chief Clans of the Roy Bareilly District.* By W. C. Bennett, Lucknow, 1870.
- (9) *The Bangash Nawabs of Farrukhabad* in J. A. S. B. of 1878 and 1879. By W. Irvine.
- (10) *The Ruhela Afghans in Calcutta Review*, 1875. By R. S. Whiteway.

- (11) *The Kingdom of Oude in Calcutta* Review, 1845. By Sir Henry Lawrence.
- (12) *Memoirs of the Life of W. Hastings*. By G. R. Gleig, 3 vols. (London, 1841).
- (13) *Warren Hastings*. By Sir Alfred Lyall. 1891.
- (14) *History of British India*. By J. Mill. Ed. by H. H. Wilson. Vols. I-VI. 1840.
- (15) *Hastings and the Rohilla War*. By Sir J. Strachey, 1892.
- (16) *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, vol. III. By Sir Jadunath Sarkar. Calcutta, 1938.
- (17) *Cambridge History of India*, vol. V. Ed. by H. H. Dodwell.
- (18) *Warren Hastings, the Maker of British India*. By A. Mervyn Davies. (London, 1935).
- (19) *Warren Hastings and Oudh*. By Dr. C. C. Davies. (O. U. Press, 1939).
- (20) *Oudh Gazetteers*, vols. 1-3. Original ed.
- (21) *The Garden of India*. By H. C. Irwin. 1880.
- (22) *A Comprehensive History of India*. Vol. I. By Henry Beveridge. 1867.
- (23) *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908.
- (24) *Shuja-ud-Daulah*. By A. F. M. Abdul Ali. Reprinted from the proceedings of I. H. R. Commission, 1926. A booklet of no independent value.

## II. *Hindi and Rajasthani.*

- (1) *Vansh-Bhaskar* (Ram Shyam Press, Jodhpur). by Surajmal Chāran of Bundi. Written about 1840 A.D. It is primarily a history of Rajput ruling families in Rajputana. But it notices the events relating to other parts of Northern India. Is based on traditions and historical poems of the court bards of Rajputana and is not generally accurate in the description of events.
- (2) *Vir Vinode* by Kaviraj Shyamal Das of Udaipur. It is a history of the ruling family of Mewar; but the author has given a long introduction of more than 200 pages in which he gives about 1½ pages for Shuja. Chapter 13 which describes Rajput activities during the epoch shows how indifferent Rajput chiefs were to the fateful developments in Bengal and elsewhere.

## III. *Urdu.*

- (1) *Sawanihat Salatin-i-Oudh* by Kamal-ud-din Haider. Vols. 1-2. N. K. Press, Lucknow, 1879.
- (2) *Guldasta-i-Oudh* (Muir Press, Delhi) by Bulaki Das.

- (3) *Tarikh Oudh* (2nd ed., N. K. Press, Lucknow) by Najmul Ghani. Vols. 1-5.
- (4) *Akhbar-ul-Sanadid*, vols. 1-2. (N. K. Press, Lucknow). By the same author. 1918.
- (5) *Tarikh Haiderabad Deccan*. (N. K. Press, Lucknow). By the same author.
- (6) *Tarikh-i-Benares*. (Sulaimani Press, Benares, 1916). By S. Mazhar Hussain.

All these works are described in my *First Two Nawabs of Oudh*.

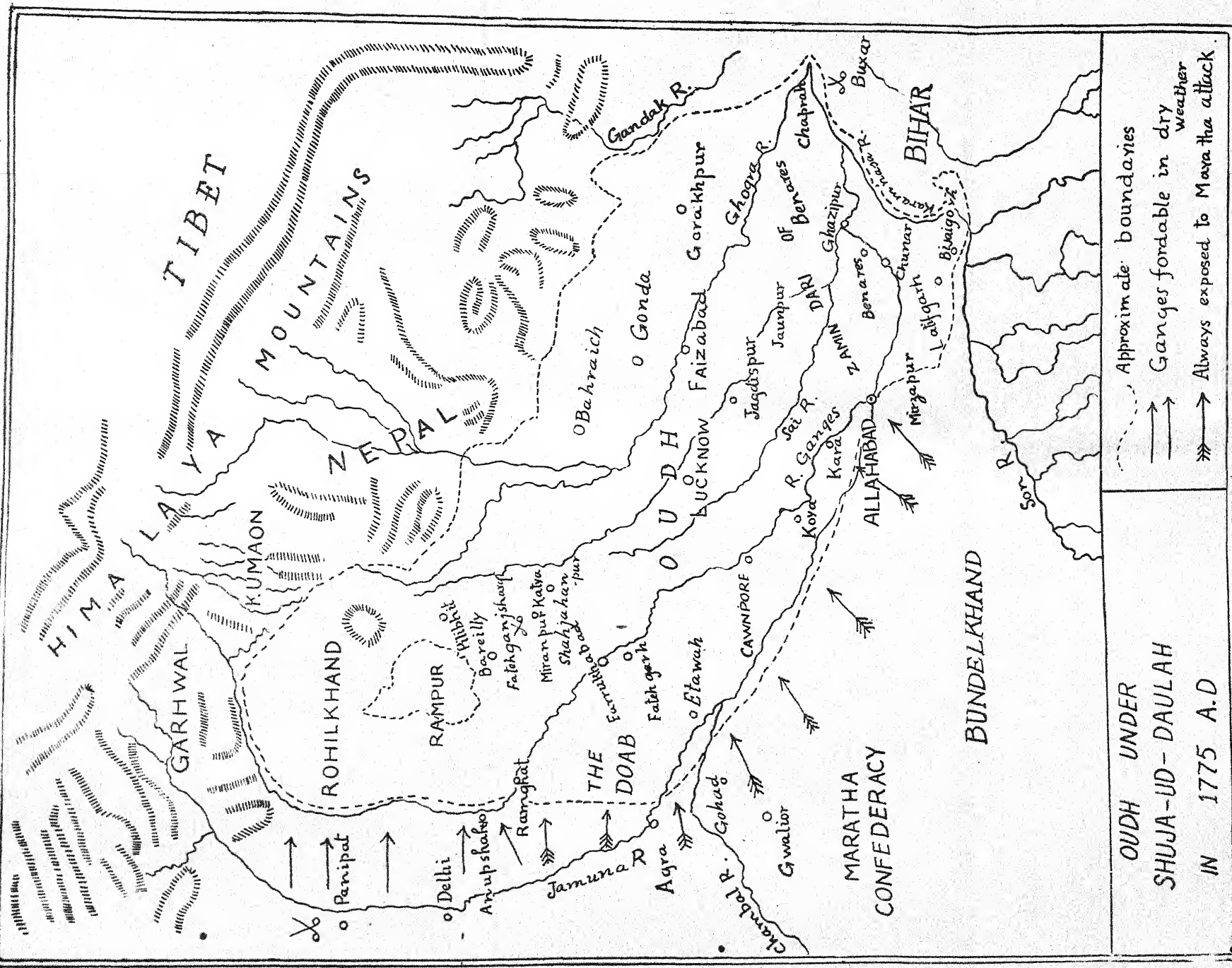
#### IV. *Marathi*.

- (1) *Marathi Riyasat*, Madhya Vibhaga, 1761-1774. By Rao Bahadur G. S. Sardesai. Ganesh Mahadev and Co., Bombay. Ed. 1925. Valuable.



## ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Read</i>	<i>For</i>
8	23	and lasting	andl asting
11	16	governorship	governership
58	18	despite repeated	despited repeate
94	28-29	imminent	immitent
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147	6	and Shuja	an Shuja
155	11	food	foo
194	8	hitch	hitc9
227	6	enable	unable
230	5	it	i
232	5	on 30th August	at 30th August
234	33	began	begun
246	14	that	hat
246	15	Pilibhit	tilibhit
251	35	abandoning	bandoning
259	7	neighbouring	neighbouring
278	8	stipulation	stiputation
323	25	Naqdi Zabti	Naqdi or Zabti
371	12	for travelling	for the travelling



OUDH UNDER  
 SHUJA-UD-AULAH  
 IN 1775 A.D

--- Approximate boundaries  
 == Ganges fordable in dry weather  
 ==> Always exposed to Maratha attack

1

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1

1

1

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2

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